

2019 Eckhart Tolle Retreat For Those Who Serve Hoopla 8h27m

[Speaker 7] (0:28 - 0:45)

Sounds True presents, for those who serve, practical guidance for being of benefit to others by spiritual teacher and author Eckhart Tolle. And now session one, how to be here.

[Speaker 1] (1:02 - 2:32:06)

Welcome to our retreat. This evening, probably I'm mainly going to talk about how to be here, about your state of consciousness here. In other words, about the retreat itself.

I'm saying probably because you never know what comes out of the present moment. The most important thing here, which, by the way, is also the most important thing in your entire life. But it's easy to lose sight of that, because you get distracted by so many things.

But here in this protected setting, you can really practice remembering that the most important thing is your state of consciousness, no matter what's going on in your life, where you are, who you are with, or what you're doing. The primary factor in whatever you're experiencing is your state of consciousness, because it is through your particular state of consciousness that you experience things. So if you are heavily identified with the conditioned thinking mind, and all its preconditioned beliefs, opinions, judgments, then that's the way you perceive the world through the veil of that.

If there are turbulent or heavy emotions running through you that you identified with, then you will experience the world around you, other people, situations, through the veil of those emotions. And you think that's how the world is. That's reality.

So you know all that. And if you are present, then you experience people, situations, and whatever is going on in your life, places very differently. This opportunity here is for you to practice being absolutely present and make that the main focus the next few days here, rather than anything else.

Leave your mind as much as possible behind. Easier said than done. Your state of consciousness not only determines your life, it even becomes two, three, four, five times more important when you, as most of you, or all of you work with people in one way or another.

And no matter in what capacity you work with people, whatever your state of consciousness is, it will transmit itself to the people that you work with. Even if you, that doesn't matter, let's say you're working with a certain part of the body, if you're a reflexologist, if you're not just treating the body through the medium of the feet, there's

all your state of consciousness also is part of that. It transmits itself.

And if you're, let's talk about the bottom, and if you're the top, if you're a hairdresser, you might think, I don't know if there are any hairdressers. I don't know whether they count as helping professionals, but they could be because they help people to have better hair, but there could be an additional dimension because they give a lot of attention to a person. And so if you're a hairdresser, also your state of consciousness transmits itself because you focus on the person.

So it transmits itself even more than in ordinary encounters when you are focused on another person, whatever the modality is that you work with. So here, this is as ideal as you can get for the practice of presence, but it won't be a hundred percent ideal. If you had a place that is a hundred percent ideal, it would not be the most ideal place because practicing presence is working with all the things that the mind would judge as not being perfect.

So you might think, well, this is a nice place, but I don't like my room that much. They should have given me a better room. If I had a better room, then I could really practice.

Or you could say, what I really miss is the massage treatment sessions. And I really need a spa. I can really completely relax into them now.

And if I had that ideal environment and just give me a week in an ideal environment, I could probably achieve enlightenment. If people came and gave me the most exquisite food, most healthy food, pure food, and treated my body, and that would be everything is no nothing disturbing around me. I have my own space.

I need my own space. I have my own space. And you would find most likely at the end of the week, when you go back into the normal world, you wouldn't function that well.

And you might even have gone to sleep, so to speak, a little bit. And because it was so, you were not being challenged, if that were even possible. You were not being challenged by any situation.

It would be like going to a movie and seeing a movie, and the characters in the movie are not challenged by anything. Everything goes so beautifully. That would be the most boring movie.

You would fall asleep. Nothing happened. Nothing went wrong.

So the characters didn't develop. They were not challenged. It was completely uninteresting.

So things, there need to be little things to challenge you. And sometimes there are big things to challenge you. But little things are everywhere.

Little things to challenge you occur all the time. Even here. You can arrive here and say, I didn't realize it was so cold here.

California was supposed to be warm and hot, I thought. Don't they grow lemons and oranges and things like that? Where do they grow?

So you can have your mind starting to comment and complain. And then you have a gap between what is and what your mind expects. So be aware of those things here, so that you can make it your practice to surrender into what is, and don't resist the challenges that come.

If anything can be changed, if your room is not good for some reason, you can ask if you can have another room. And if you can't, then that is the perfect room for you. So make it your practice to say that whatever happens here is the perfect situation for you.

It doesn't mean you cannot walk away from if somebody's talking too much, and you say, okay, I'd rather sit somewhere else next time, or this time. But whatever is, is the perfect situation. So let go of the judgmental mind, the complaining, entity, and see what happens if you approach each moment in that state of surrender.

And then the depths will reveal itself to you that you hadn't noticed before, because you were trapped in the veil of the judgmental mind. The very wonderful thing is being here with many others from all over the world, who are also awakening, or many of you already awake most of the time. And I was asked not long ago, when you travel, somebody asked me, how is it that you go to different countries and you meet different people, different nationalities?

Do they, how are there big differences in how people receive these teachings? And I was surprised when I answered, because I hadn't known it before, because I hadn't thought about it. Actually, all those humans who are in the awakening process, begin to resonate at a certain frequency that is the same for all of them.

So you may find here, when you meet somebody from a very distant country, I will read to you in a minute, that's why I brought the folder, the different countries here that people have come from. You may find, there may be some exceptions, but you're more likely to find when, let's say an American, many of you are from this country, meeting a Russian person, for example, or whatever, Chinese, and both of you may find that you resonate more with each other than with those of your own country, who are completely conditioned still, collectively and personally. So that you will, you find something that unites you, that transcends cultural conditioning and social conditioning.

And that's a wonderful thing. So it's because, it's almost like a new species is coming out of the old. And you are part of that.

And no matter where you go in the world, you will very quickly recognize those who are

also in the awakening process. So I will tell you from what countries you can meet people here, although some of them are only one or two people per country, but that's okay. United States.

That reminds me, I was going to put this on before coming on stage, but I forgot. I've had it for years, a badge somebody gave me. It says USA if you read it vertically, but if you read it horizontally, it says United States of Awareness.

Now that is a work in progress, of course. And I need to find out where you can get these. And one interesting thing that might be helpful is to send one of these to each member of Congress in Washington.

Of course, the United States of Awareness would be the entire country. It would be all the awakening humans. And as humans awaken all over the planet, that would eventually become the United States of Awareness.

So we have people from Australia, Canada. Those are the two largest contingents. And then we have participants from Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

I expect there to be a lot of interaction between us on this retreat. And I expect there will be many questions that people want to ask, whether there are any answers coming through this form here. We don't know.

We'll see. But there will be many questions. And now let's just focus, because it's the introduction to our retreat.

So let's focus on your state of consciousness right now. It's easy, relatively easy to be present as you sit here. The retreat, however, is not confined to our sessions, no matter where you are during the retreat, no matter what you're doing.

That is all part of the retreat. It's a totality of this experience. So use every moment here, whether you're walking, sitting, standing, eating, to practice presence.

First of all, nature. Nature that surrounds you here is remarkable. And there are not really any other parts of the world where you find this kind of vegetation.

There are trees here, and there's a magic to nature here. There's a magic to nature everywhere. There's a special kind of magic here, which part of that is the sky, the ocean, the fog that comes drifting in every hour, every couple of hours, you will notice.

And there's no fog. That kind of fog is unique to this area of Northern California. So

there's a magic to just watching nature as you walk or sit or go to the beach.

And as you watch nature, be there as, not as a person, but as a conscious presence that is perceiving all that amazing magic. You listen, you might, all your senses are alert because that is part of presence. And you not only look, you listen, the sounds, the wind, birds, or the ocean.

You can feel the breeze on your skin. You smell the air. And this practice is, you're practicing being in this world as a walking presence rather than as a person with a history that's still going to be there.

Don't worry. You still have your history. Remember who you are or your past.

But that is, the shift is that the formless you, the timeless you, which is consciousness itself, emerges more and more fully through the gaps in the temporal you, through the gaps between two thoughts. It emerges even through the cells of your body so that there's a likeness to who you are. This has nothing to do with your physical weight.

There's a likeness to who you are as presence emerges and you as the personality loses, the personality loses its opaqueness, its density. If you look at any human who has not, has no access to the spirit dimension, has had no separation yet between who they are as consciousness and their thought processes and emotional processes, there is a density to those humans. And it doesn't mean that the spirit dimension is not present in them.

It is, but it's being obscured by the density of mental, emotional conditioning. And this density of mental, emotional conditioning is called a person. And it has a name tag attached to it.

And that's me. And all the things that make up the identity of the person consists of accumulations of certain predominant emotions and certain predominant thought patterns that go through their minds. So the combination of those predominant emotions and thought patterns make up the personality.

Whatever might be happy looking or predominantly looking out for the next thing that's going wrong, it might be a fearful conditioning, emotional, mental, where's the next blow that the universe is going to give me, going to come from, or predominantly angry, looking for another excuse to be angry again. Please make me angry. I'm waiting for something.

I'm waiting for something to react to. So you have the person, some persons are relatively well adjusted, but no person is really happy for long. No person has really any depth to him or herself.

Well, they do, but they don't know it. So if you have a depth, but you don't sense your

own depth, you just live on the, yours is a surface reality, then it's as if you didn't have it. As I've said, you could be a beggar sitting by the side of the road, because you've forgotten that you have \$10 million in your Swiss bank account, and you can't remember the number.

But this is nothing because \$10 million wouldn't make man happy either. So it's not a good analogy, but it's the best I can find. But this is an experiential thing.

And I believe that almost everyone here can verify in their own experience, what it is that I'm talking about, because many of you will experience yourself, sometimes what the personality predominates again, sometimes in certain situations in your life, the heaviness, the opaqueness, the density of the personality returns when you become very reactive. It happens easily in family situations, which are always the most difficult training ground, but the best for staying conscious, usually relationships, close relationships, and then come work situations, and so on. You get challenged, and the personality reasserts itself completely, and you become just as unconscious as all the others who've never gone through any awakening process, and then you wake up suddenly after a few hours, or a day, or a few minutes, if you're lucky, and say, oh, what was that?

And then whatever words you used to describe that, you said, I lost it completely. What did you lose? I lost it.

What? I lost, well, of course, you lost consciousness, awareness. You didn't know who you were anymore.

You thought you were the little person again. So a retreat situation is ideal for practicing being the presence rather than being the person, because you don't need the person that much here. The one, the most challenging thing in the retreat situation is interacting with others.

Although everybody here is awakening, it does not mean when you start talking to somebody that their personality will not, especially as you start discussing something, their personality will not very quickly come up and predominate so that the presence is lost and recedes. It's covered up. It's not lost.

It suddenly gets covered up again. That may happen to you too, because the awakening humans are like transitional entities. They are hybrids.

The awakening humans are hybrids. I can compare them to, we all know the caterpillar and the butterfly, the most incredible metamorphosis when the caterpillar dies and the butterfly becomes transformed into the butterfly. The awakening humans, many of them are like a butterfly that's emerging from the caterpillar.

And then as it emerges from the caterpillar, it still experiences him or herself as a

caterpillar. Although he or she is already emerging as a butterfly, then he still falls back into thinking he's a caterpillar and behaves like one. Although he's already become a butterfly.

So then the butterfly starts behaving like a caterpillar again. Can't fly anymore. And then you need something to remind you that you're not the caterpillar anymore.

So the caterpillar in this analogy is the person without any awareness. Now, as presence arises in you, it does not mean that certain aspects of your personality will not remain. Certain aspects of your personality will remain because you have a form identity.

Everybody has a form identity. There are certain things, certain ways in which you do things. There may be ways in which you speak.

And if they are not dysfunctional, but just certain characteristics, they may remain. So if they are dysfunctional, that means there's an unconsciousness and those will dissolve as awareness shines through the person. So then what happens to us is, yes, you are still a person, but a different dimension of consciousness that is not conditioned shines through the personality.

And as that grows, the personality of the person recedes more and more and just enough remains so that you can function as a form in this world. All that remains. You can function well.

You may find in your daily life fluctuations in the intensity of to what extent you are a person and to what extent you are the presence. And in your work situation, and we will go into that in greater depth in the next few days, in your work situation, you will be of the greatest benefit if the personality can operate as little as possible. If the personality is in the background so that when you work with people, you are predominantly presence.

And that is a wonderful shift. I noticed that there was many years ago when I went through my shift in consciousness, people started coming to me to ask questions initially. Later I said, okay, I'm doing counseling sessions, but at first it was just people asking questions and then I would give answers.

And one of the first people who came to me was this lady who was a former Catholic nun. She had spent, I think, 20 years in a monastery, nunnery, whatever it's called. And she couldn't find God there, so she left.

And then she came to me, not because I'm God, well, I am God too, but so is she. She came to me to find herself. She realized it wasn't a question of finding God, it was finding the depths of who she is, and then she would find her connectedness with source, and that's God.

So, and as I listened to her talking about her difficulties and so on, and this was not the first time, but I was beginning to realize when I listened to people and when I spoke to them, there was this intense, peaceful, but a very intense presence arising, whether it was arising within or in the room or both, I didn't know, but it was there. It seemed to be within and without. And then she said, in one session, she stopped speaking suddenly and she said, oh, I can feel it, you are doing healing on me.

And I said, am I? Because I wasn't doing anything. But there was definitely what she could sense was the energy.

There was this intense energy field of presence filling the room. And so it wasn't just within, it was there. And I believed her when she said, you are a healer.

And then she talked to other people about it, and then people started coming to me who wanted physical healing. And that was fine for a while. Some got healed, some didn't.

And then I realized the people who wanted just the physical healing were not interested in anything else. So that's not right. I'm not really a healer.

So I stopped doing that kind of healing. But the important thing here is when you work with somebody, there is you, there is the other person, there is whatever modality you apply to that situation that you have learned. You might be a doctor, which you spent many years accumulating knowledge, and you apply that modality to this therapeutic situation.

You may be a nurse. Also, you have to study several years to be a nurse. You apply that.

If you're a therapist, you probably have gone to therapy training, university. You have certain modalities of how you approach the therapeutic situation, how, what kind of questions you ask, what you're supposed to say, what you're not supposed to say. Or if you do body work, of course, you have learned that.

That's your modality. Whatever it is, that's fine. This is what you practice.

But if that's all there is, you, a person practicing a modality of a therapeutic modality, then the most vital element is still missing. So there's always a third element there, in addition to you, the person practicing the modality. And that can only be there if, despite the fact that you have to use your mind to some extent to help the person, if you're a doctor, very much so, because you have to think, okay, what can I, how am I going to treat this person?

What is this person suffering from? But in between, there needs to be that alertness that you bring to the situation, which basically is, there need to be moments when you're not thinking. That's basically, and that is how presence arises.

When, if you are continuously thinking, when working with somebody, what to do, how can I be, how I want to be helpful, it's just say something that can really help this person. If you let go of that and become comfortable with not knowing for moments, then this depth dimension begins to come into the room through you. And that really is the sacred dimension of two people being together.

So you invite the presence and the presence is the really, what really matters there. Many of you know that already. Many of you probably have been doing it for perhaps for quite a long time, perhaps without even knowing it, that this is what it is.

So we have a line in the Course in Miracles that says, a healer does not heal, he lets healing be. So even though you practice a modality, it's a balance between still applying your knowledge to the situation, whether it's physical knowledge or whatever it is that you do, and yet not be confined to that in your interaction with that person. So this is the balance between what you know on the level of form and inviting the other dimension into the situation.

And that is the real healing in a wider sense, which may result in physical healing, but there's a deeper healing that is much more important. Because what that really means, the deeper healing is the awakening. It's the realization who you are beyond the person.

And that can come to whoever you are working with, if you are not there predominantly as a person. So I'd love to, in the next few days, answer questions about that, how that works in specific situations. But that is the essence of the healing situation, no matter what you do.

So here we practice being the presence rather than the person. This becomes challenging the moment you interact with people here. Some of you may not want to speak.

I believe we will have some tables set aside for people who don't want to talk, who just want to be on a silent retreat. And for them, it's enough to come to the sessions here and the rest of the time, they want to be in silence, which is wonderful. Others may want to connect with others and speak, which is also wonderful.

But here the challenge is, and I'd ask you to use that as an opportunity, because the moment you start to interact through your mind with the mind of another, you can very easily get pulled out of presence. And before you know it, after two minutes of talking, you're completely in the mind, which is your ego. And especially if there's a disagreement or something like that about spirituality.

And you know absolutely that you are right. This is, a particular skill is required, and I ask you to practice here if you interact with people. To stay present while you speak and listen to somebody, so that you don't get lost in the mental stream, which is often

accompanied by certain emotions too.

Don't get lost because it can drag you along. That mental stream can pull you, and then you say all the usual stuff that you've been saying for years. All the old positions and all the things that you're so sure of, and that is how it is.

Now many of you are not that deeply entrenched anymore, but it could happen that you fall back into this caterpillar existence. So to remain present when you begin to use the mind to interact with another, it requires enormous skill and alertness. Now how does that look in practice?

Well first of all, you bring an alertness to the situation. First of all, when you listen to the other, you're not preparing your next statement in the mind. There's complete listening, and that's of course in any client situation also, that is a vital practice, even though you might have an enormous amount of knowledge about what this person needs.

And there needs to be, before you apply this enormous amount of knowledge that you have, which is good, there needs to be a space where you're not applying it yet. There needs to be a space where you give this person complete and utter attention. So you are there as an alert, receptive presence with the other person.

Do not get buried underneath your knowledge that what you have learned to help others, but you can, this can completely occupy your mind to such an extent that there's no space left to even realize that there is a human being there. We all know the cases of certain physicians and doctors, some of them who do not, don't see you anymore as a human being. They see you as a symptom.

They only address the symptom. There are some doctors, of course they wouldn't be here, they're not here, but there are some, I know there are some doctors here, but they are different, they are conscious, that's why they're here. But there are many, quite a few doctors who, of course, they have little time, they have so many patients, they hardly look at you.

Okay, good morning, what's the problem? And then they're already looking at their papers. Okay, yeah, okay.

So then they think about what the symptoms are. Okay, that's it. Okay, I'll give you that, take these pills and come back in a week's time.

Okay, next please. There's no, you're not a human being anymore, and it's a pity because they themselves are lost, they lost themselves in the system, in the mind, in their knowledge, in the pressures exerted upon them through the system that they work in, lost. So no matter how much knowledge you have acquired, don't let the knowledge absorb you completely, don't let it, so that there's no longer the spaciousness in you.

The more you know, the more important it becomes, the more vital it is. Some of you may be here who are practicing spiritual healing, in which case your natural state would be to be in that thoughtless awareness, and you're not, you wouldn't be thinking about, okay, what can I prescribe this person, or what, what is the history, or what are many different types of healing? Anyway, I hope some healers will also ask questions.

So, as you are with the person, there need to be spaces when you don't know anything. No matter how much knowledge you have acquired, you need to have spaces with that other person, they don't need to be long, spaces, it's hard, I don't really want to put a figure to them, but let's, even if it's just 10 seconds, you have 20, 10, 20 seconds of when you're just looking and listening. And during that time, you're not searching your memory banks, or in your mind for the thing, what is, how can I help this person, what do I need to do?

And after you've given that person your complete attention, then the mind may operate, and then you're, okay, this is, you may get insights, or you may apply your knowledge, and then you do that, and then again, there comes a moment when you're just, you give a fullest attention, and then you can, if you're a doctor, you suddenly, there's a true relationship, you're not relating to a patient predominantly anymore, yes, on the level of form, he or she is a patient, but you are also there as a human being.

As I say, you might have heard me say, I like the fact, for a long time I thought, what a pity that the English language doesn't have a word that means both man and woman, as German has, but now I'm quite happy that English doesn't have one word that means both man and woman, the German word would be Mensch, which is human being, the Yiddish Mensch is a slightly different thing, it has a particular meaning, it means a real human being, so the human being, the human is the form, your person, your body, your mental conditioning, your mind, the being is the formless dimension in you, so you are coming together of form and formlessness, that's basically the two dimensions of who you are, you are both form and space, the essence of who you are is space, you can find the same when you look into the night sky at night, what do you see?

Space, well you don't see space, there is space and there are stars, things and space, so you'd also, this entire universe consists of space, without which nothing could be, but it has no actual, you can't say here is space, you can never point to space, where? And the same thing, you cannot point to who you are in your essence, you are formlessness, formless consciousness and form, human being, there are many humans in whom the being has not emerged yet, it's covered up by the human, so as you practice, don't be a practitioner who is only human, without any access to being, that's a very impoverished life and a very impoverished therapeutic situation too, when you are just there as a human, so the being element is that, so no matter what you do, have the courage to be there both, not just as a person and as whatever you are, nurse, doctor, therapist, massage therapist, yoga instructor, whatever, hairdresser, not just, you are both a

person and the presence, in the therapeutic situation, the presence intensifies, the moment a person comes, the session, whatever you call it, begins, there's the presence arises more than it would be in a normal situation, this is I encountered as soon as I started many years ago, seeing people privately for counseling, the moment they came, they came into the room, first they were on a park bench and then eventually they came to a room, and the moment they came in, they sat down and the moment I looked at them, and they started speaking, and there was not a single thought in my head, nobody had taught me that, it just happened naturally, and I didn't have much knowledge about psychotherapy and what to do or what to say, later I read some books about it, but at the beginning I didn't, so there was just, my mind was totally still, and there was just, okay, and then they started to talk, and then I could feel the presence, and it was, it is a wonderful intensity, but a peaceful intensity to it, and out of that usually came the first things that came out of my mouth, and often it was an additional question, what about that, and another question, again without any prior decision what I was going to say, it just came out of that field of presence, so I was lucky that I didn't know much about therapeutic situations, so there was not that much knowledge that I had to relinquish for those moments, I realize now that that is the essence of every therapeutic situation, or every, any helping situation, is that factor, and that can only come in if you know, it sounds a little drastic, if you know how to stop thinking in that situation, for just brief moments, not by suppressing thought, because you could stop thinking if you stop breathing, you can by forcing yourself, you can keep thought at bay, but the moment you start breathing again, you also start thinking again, and then you'll be thinking two or three times as much as before, because you have some catching up to do, so it's not through willpower, and I want to get some feedback, not tonight, but in the next two days from you, how many of you are already able to, by choice, not by willpower, but by simply relinquishing the need to think, in other words, stop thinking, without any pushing, without any pressure, without any, without any exerting any kind of violence or pressure to yourself, none of that, simply by being so alert, raising the frequency through that alertness, that thought just doesn't happen, so you can start with, I sometimes, it helps to, you can, you can say, while I hold this, this represents the space between my two hands, represents the moment of no thought, and you go like that, you don't have to do it now, but you go like that, and let's say, let's give it 10 seconds right now, later you'll give me some feedback, are you able to simply let go of thinking, and just remain as an aware presence, here and now, start now, okay, that was about 10 seconds, now, some of you may, you may feel it's almost like saying, don't think of a white elephant, or something like that, and the moment you say, don't think of a white, are you thinking of a white elephant, you may find fragments of thought coming, like little wisps of, like the fog that comes in from the ocean here, and it comes and then floats past, and if you don't follow it up with your attention, it floats into that space of presence in your mind, like a fragment, and then disappears, and then it could be that another fragment of thought floats in, but if you give it attention, then it'll become a full-fledged thought, and then you follow it where it wants to take, where it wants you to go,

this is the essence, really, of all spirituality, is to be able to relinquish thought, and not by falling below thought, which would be getting sleepy and tired, so you can't think much anymore, because you're too tired to think, this is your falling below thought, and it feels good, it's better than a tortured mind, you might think, and that would also be the state of the fool in mythology, who doesn't think much, but he's more connected with source than the more highly developed human in mythology, but no, this is not falling below thought, we are talking about rising above thought, so it's not, if I act it out, it's not necessarily like, although I must say, it probably feels good, I tried it, we were in Amsterdam a few years ago, and somebody got it for us, and then in the hotel room, I mean, I'm sorry, it doesn't, it's fine, but it's, I mean, it's just a little plant, so why not smoke it?

It was interesting, oh, but it was, I wouldn't want to do it again, because my usual state of consciousness is preferable to that, but I can see how somebody who is very burdened by the, by his or her mind, experiences that as an enormous relief, but it does tend to pull you, especially if you overdo it, below thought, and if you overdo it a lot, then you can become lethargic, so I'm not saying don't do it, if you enjoy it, it's probably fine, but we don't really need it, we are rising above thought, this is what, this is, and no, this is, applies, this is the next step in human evolution, is transcend thought, transcend doesn't mean it doesn't happen anymore, but you go beyond it, you can use it, but you're no longer confined by it, now those humans who are not awakened are confined by their thinking, they are trapped in the conditioned mind, and so we are becoming free of this prison, which is the being imprisoned by your conditioned mind, and mistaking it for who you are, this is the essence of not knowing who you are in reality, so the practice then, practice it here, when you are not thinking, you are still there as the essential you, is still there, and it's there more strongly, I believe when I wrote in the little book, stillness speaks, I think in the first sentence, it says something like, you're never more essentially yourself than when you are still, that is the true essence of your being, that you can feel that as consciousness, as presence itself, that is who you are, so stillness, really when I use the word stillness, it means rising above thought, it doesn't matter right now for how long you rise above thought, little moments of presence are enough, and you will find if you are able in your daily life, and practice here, because here, it's a very conducive environment for practicing, practice rising above thought here, in whatever city, walking, looking around at nature, perceiving nature, what do you need to think? You don't need to know that this is called the Monterey pine tree, you know that already, so when you walk around, you don't need to think, oh here's another Monterey pine tree, this one, this one is particularly big, I wonder how old it is, and you have all kinds of men, there is a place for that also, there is a place for thinking about trees, but not right here now, there's a different purpose, you actually, there's two ways, let's talk about the Monterey pine tree, there is a way, there are two ways of knowing this tree, or anything else, or human being, you can know it through conceptual mind, through your knowledge, this, you know how old it is, how it grows, what kind of climate it grows in, and so on, you

know, for example, the amazing fact that when the cones fall, I read that, I was in the green room, when the, when the cones fall, they, the seeds are trapped in them, until there's a forest fire, which could take years, and years, and years, and only when there's a forest fire, which looks like a very bad thing, but like many bad things, are not really bad, because there's something else behind them, when these pine cones are in this extreme heat of the forest fire, then they release their seeds, and then when trees have burned down around them, there's more light for the new trees to grow, so they trap their seeds until there's extreme heat, isn't that amazing, they're waiting for a disaster, they're waiting for destruction, so that they can grow again, and now this is all knowledge, and this is wonderful too, to know that, but you would be missing something very important, if that were the only way in which you can really know that tree, there is another way of knowing that tree, which is not as just as important, even more important, and that is to know it directly without the conceptual mind, and you do that by approaching it in that state of thoughtless awareness, and you look at it, and as you look at it without thought, you can sense a kind of space of oneness with it, because the tree really arises in that space of consciousness, there's no longer you and the tree, there's just an awareness of the tree, and you can sense that awareness as yourself, and in that you know the tree, that's you could call it unitive knowing, where there's no longer a sense of separation between that which you perceive and you, and imagine doing that with another human being, where you can look at another human being without any conceptualization, and then you can sense that this presence that is you, also in them, it's the same presence, the same one consciousness, you sense it in the other, if the mind is still, then suddenly you have the true empathy, which means really another word for it is really love, or lovingness, is to recognize that you and the other are in essence one, but that recognition is not conceptual, it might become conceptual when you start talking about it, when I talk about it, it becomes conceptual, but I'm talking about it using the concepts as pointers, in the hope that as I talk about it, you realize the actual place to which these words point, which is that realization, so if you can practice that here, not only with trees, but also with other humans, which is a mind, so it's easy to be still with a tree and present, you can even sense the stillness of the tree, if you are still enough, because only the stillness in you can sense the fact that the tree is very still, but can you sense the stillness in another human who can't stop talking to you, that's possible too, but you have to sense it within, so no matter where you go, if you look at teachings, Jesus teachings, we only really have it as fragments, we don't have a complete teaching, it's miraculous that these fragments survive, but in the fragments of the teachings of Jesus, you can also see that he talks about the importance of take no thought for the moral, but just give attention to what is here now, don't be worried, don't judge, it's all the mind, we have it very clearly in the Buddha's teaching, we have it in more recent Ramana Maharshi's teaching in India, as I've quoted before, I'll quote it again in case you don't know it yet, Ramana Maharshi, wonderful Indian spirit teacher, lived in the first half of the 20th century, when they asked him, how can I know that I'm making progress on the spiritual path, how do I know that I'm making progress, he said,

oh, that's easy, the degree of absence of thinking is the measure of progress on the spiritual path, oh, okay, let me think, did I understand that right, the degree of absence of thinking, can you explain that a bit more, please, so whether you get, you can only get it when you hear an answer like that, the degree of absence of thoughts is the measure for progress on the spiritual path, you can't start thinking about this answer now, obviously, this answer is a pointer, and you can only understand what he's talking about by not thinking, oh, and that is the Zen moment of Satori, when your mind stops and you go, ah, thank you, oh, thank you, master, thank you, I got it now, okay, that's good, not whether he still got it a minute later, it's secondary, but at least he got it now, so that's, or if you're interested in some of you may have read Krishnamurti's writings, he was not aligned to any religion or spiritual tradition, he always said, no, no, this is all rubbish, and he would talk and he talked and talked and talked for 50 years, 60 years or longer, but if you, it all comes down to one thing that he never explicitly said, and that is stop thinking, he just gets you there gradually, he says, can the mind actually understand, is it possible for the mind to grasp the reality of this, no, it isn't, well, he didn't say no, it isn't, but you were supposed to say no, and then your mind is supposed to stop. Now, the greatest achievement, it does not matter your life situation, whether you consider your life up to this point as a great success, or medium success, or not so good, or failed at most things that I tried, or never failed because I never tried anything, no, these are all conceptual judgments of the mind, of course, whatever you say, but no matter where you're at, whether your world, the world is telling you that you're a great success, or the world is telling you that you're not particularly important, all this is irrelevant if you consider what really matters is where you are in the evolution of human consciousness, how, what, how does the evolution of human consciousness manifest through you, that determines failure or success in life, and of course, the world doesn't know much about that, it doesn't know that, it can't, so if you are able to no longer be trapped in compulsive and involuntary thinking, then your life has succeeded beyond any measure, beyond measure, if you are able to transcend you, this means consciousness, not you, the person, the person cannot transcend itself, the person is the identification with thought, the person is consciousness dreaming, the awakening is consciousness awakens, and then, yes, the person continues to be there, but you are then in lucid, the lucid dreaming, which is lucid living, if you are able to step out of thought by choice, then you embody the next step in the evolution of consciousness on the planet, and you are vital here, no matter what you do externally, and that state, which is a state of connectedness with source, with source consciousness, what repercussions that has in your life, we don't know, how it manifests, we don't know, it will manifest in different ways for different people, it could just be that you sit somewhere and just emanate, this is one extreme, you just sit somewhere and emanate presence, I would recommend that you do that in India, not here, because they would recognize you as, and they would call you a holy man or a holy woman, simply because you emanate presence, and somehow, even people who haven't got it, because it's in their, somewhere, their genes, or something, they recognize it, and then they go, oh, if you do it here, of course, you will

be put away, or you can have a very simple job, where you simply, no matter who you come into contact with, you emanate, and everybody who has contact with you gets a little whiff of that, the presence, oh, or doing something that you hadn't thought of before, the presence does it through you, I spent, as you may know, I spent many years of my life, before anything much happened, after the shift in consciousness, just being, I did occasional jobs, eventually, I had temporary jobs here and there, except gradually, I was helping people with becoming more present, but even that took a while, there were still huge spaces, I wasn't seeing five people a day, I might, at the beginning, see two people a week, and there were these huge spaces, so me just being there, and think, okay, and occasionally, the mind would say, what's your life all about, you're not doing anything, well, okay, that's how it is, and that goes on and on, and then at some point, something happened, it's almost as if I had to be in presence for a long, long time, before it started to manifest, first as a teaching to individuals, and then it became a book, and then it became this, but it's all, I'm not doing it as a person, it's presence operating, just raise your frequency by being very alert and still, and then you go, occasionally, you might feel your mind coming, saying, okay, I'm not thinking now, that's okay, and then you let go of that, it's a little cloud that comes, and then it evaporates, and that is enormously satisfying, because in that moment, you are free of the person, complete, the person is just relatively unimportant, there is a presence, many people, most people drive on automatic, they are thinking while they're driving, one small part of their mind is doing the driving, and the rest of their mind is thinking about something completely different, and sometimes they think so much, that even the small part that's driving gets absorbed in their thinking, and then the accident happens, but driving also, it's a beautiful thing, your entire life experience gets transformed, as you bring in more and more spaces of not thinking, and then, when you resume thinking, when it's needed, because you have, at some point, you have to think, you actually think much more clearly, because you had spaces of no thought, because the thought that you think, the thinking that then happens, is, you still have that connectedness with the depth of who you are, the source consciousness, which then inspires your thought processes, rather than having thought processes that are repetitive, as most people have, same thoughts again and again and again, year after year after year, so the inspired thinking can only come by bringing in no thinking, inspired thinking depends on your ability to stop thinking, but stop thinking is an end in itself, it is so satisfying in itself, because you experience life in a much more joyful way, through not judging things, it's an amazing thing, if you compare that with the so-called normal human state of continuously finding fault, complaining, judging, criticizing, what a nightmare, and suddenly you go in that clarity of perception, that's again, that's the entire essence of Zen, the same, all the teachings is that, so and being totally present is no thought, and then the mind made self, the person, is no longer the foundation for your sense of identity, your sense of identity has shifted from being this limited person with its ups and downs and successes and failures, likes and dislikes, opinions, viewpoints, has shifted from there, your identity is consciousness itself, and that's the foundation for your sense of identity, so you don't

need the, what the ego, the ego is the false identity, and the ego needs defensiveness, it needs to be fed all the time, it needs to incorporate people and things into its sense of self, it feels always insufficient, not enough, ill at ease, irritated, angry, sad, complaining, all the different states, so I'm looking forward to feedback from you about your ability to refrain from thinking, your ability to transcend thinking, allowing this moment to be as it is, is one of the doorways into the state of not thinking, if you just always work with the present moment, allow it to be, because it already is, so what else can you do, it is, so align yourself with the is-ness of what is, and then you realize a lot of the thinking is arguing with the is-ness, so when you align yourself with the is-ness of things, then there's no need to think that much anymore, unless there's a specific problem to solve, but even there, if you have a problem to solve, to have fruitful thinking, go into no thinking fast before you start to think, become still, present, alert. Thank you very much, we will, this evening, have our first session dealing with questions, if possible, write as legibly as you can, otherwise I'll get really irritated, and my mind will say, do they expect me to read this, to be able to read this, why can't they write more legibly, isn't it common sense that they should write legibly, why do people do things like that, that would be a normal ego reaction to something that in itself is perfectly okay, because you can either read it or you can't, but the ego adds a story to it, and behind the story is always an attempt to be more right than the other person, there's always an attempt to have in some kind of superiority, it's unconscious, of course, ego is always unconscious, alternatively, what actually, I don't get irritated, as you might have guessed, if there's a paper that's not legible, I look at it, okay, I'll put this aside and give it more attention later, in the meantime, I'll read the legible ones, and then if there's time later, I'll give it more attention, there's no problem without a story, and there's no, you are not wrong, and I'm not right, this is just what is, it's just a tiny example of the difference between aligning yourself to the simple isness of the present moment and imposing a story on it in the service of the self that wants to inflate itself, indignation, irritation, they should, why do they, don't they know better? I said, oh, they're all stories in the service of a false sense of self.

In presence, all this, what I sometimes call unnecessary baggage that people manufacture mentally and emotionally, all that unnecessary baggage, the heaviness to it that they carry around doesn't arise anymore, and this is simple, this is what is, I can either do this, or I can do that, I can deal with it now, I can put it aside, no story, but this is frustrating to the ego, because when there's no longer any story where you oppose the other, where you make yourself feel superior to the other, then there's no food for the ego anymore, but there's an incredible lightness, and the lightness of being comes, and the heaviness goes out of situations, that really, that's what the ego is, a heavy me, and even when it attempts to make itself superior, what it doesn't recognize is that all these are really forms of suffering, the ego doesn't even recognize suffering as suffering, it doesn't realize that when you get angry or irritated about somebody else's behavior and bring up a big story about it, you are actually in a state of suffering, if you were able

to have attention in your body, you would notice that your body is suffering, because those things affect the smooth, harmonious working of the energy field that goes through the body, so an angry thought has an effect on the body, small irritation all has an effect, and the body doesn't really like it, but the ego, the ego itself is not in touch with the body, so it, and it mistakes suffering for something good, anger, I can really get into this, so you can look at your own life and see where you are manufacturing unnecessary stories, both in small situations and in bigger life situations, and in situations to do with relatives, family members, partners, ex-partners, a wonderful source of egoic stories, you can talk about your ex-husband or wife for hours, either to somebody else if they're ready to listen, or in your own mind, or you had a confrontation or an exchange with somebody yesterday, and you can go on, continue that in your mind and say so many hurtful things to the other person that unfortunately you couldn't think of in the situation, but you can relive it now, and it's almost as good as the real thing, so in that fantasy world of the mind, you can be right again and again, and the other person can be wrong again and again, how wonderful, these things are not, all this is what we call unconscious, so people don't know what they are doing, for them that is their reality, now can we understand why Jesus said, forgive them for they know not what they do, they are unconscious, it's an automatic process of ego inflation, of ego reinforcement, it's conditioned, learned, it's part of the structure of the mind, so that is something important to recognize, you might have, stories can be new stories, like the one I just talked about, a simple event, you get irritated about something because they are not doing it right, they should know better, or why don't they, or whatever, or it can be a long-standing story that has been going on in your life for years, a story about your parents, for example, a story about somebody in your life, years ago, what they did, often people approach me with questions like, how do I deal with betrayal in relationship, how do I, my husband, my wife, had for a long time an affair with somebody else and then finally he walked off with her or him, he or she, he betrayed me and I've had this, how can I get beyond that terrible thing of having been betrayed by him, well, the terrible, much more terrible than what happened is the word betrayal, because that word is already a story, so if you remove that, what is left, just the simple events, he, while we were still, or she, while we were still married, was in a relationship with somebody else but didn't tell me about it, and in the end, he, she walked off with him or her, and I felt very hurt, and I can still feel that pain inside me now, that's basically, that's what there is to it, but the reason why you still feel that pain is because you went beyond the simple facts of the situation, you added the betrayal story to it, and by dwelling on that mentally, it continuously renewed the pain, the initial pain of the event, so it is normal when somebody you are close to walks off with somebody else that you feel emotional pain, but this does not have to be carried on one year into the next and into the next and into the next, that is like a wound, like a physical wound, a wound is inflicted on you, and then the wound has a certain time span within which it heals, it may leave a scar behind, but it's healed, the wound itself is healed, the scar may still be there, and in the same way, an event like that, yes, there may be some suffering there, but if you add the story

to it, which of course is in the service of the ego, then it can go on, the hurt goes on for years, because you relive it, by calling it the betrayal, you relive it continuously, the fact is, no human being can act beyond their level of consciousness, so your husband, your ex-husband or ex-wife manifested the particular level of consciousness that they were at at the time, and that's what happened, so he didn't realize, she didn't realize that she was hurting you, or she realized, or he realized that he was hurting you, but something else was more important for him or her, and so that corresponded to his or her level of consciousness at the time, everybody has to suffer the consequences of their actions, because most probably, this new relationship of your ex-wife or ex-husband didn't work out either, because again, the same level of consciousness or unconsciousness manifested in that relationship, and the same thing started all over again, most likely, or they became a bit more conscious, in fact, they might be awakening now, and you might meet him or her again accidentally in the street, and they might now manifest a completely different level of consciousness, but if you are stuck in the story about them, you won't even see that, you will see the old person still, there will be no resolution possible, if you are not stuck in the old story, if you simply accept the facts of the situation, then you would be open to meeting this person again, and realizing, oh, this is not the same unconscious jerk that I was married to, jerk is, of course, the story again, he is now much more awake than I knew him, what a pity, why couldn't he be awake when I was married to him, why does the universe always does that to me, and this new person, she gets to live with a conscious person, so the two levels of story, observe the spontaneous stories that arise when little things don't go according to expectations, and in an unconscious attempt to make somebody wrong, and the old longstanding stories that, in some cases, have provided you with a sense of identity, so longstanding stories that are frequently repeated in the mind about what some, you and somebody else, and what happened and what they did or failed to do, it is not unusual for a human being to derive a significant part of their sense of identity from such collection of three or four of those stories, or even just one big one, we all know the expression victim identity, you cannot see yourself as a victim without a story around it, you must have a story, and of course, people do bad things to other people, there's no doubt about that, but when you construct a story, you are doing something to yourself, unconsciously, that is often worse than the initial event that the story is about, because it prolongs it indefinitely, what otherwise would have a certain time span, the injury, the healing process, and the scar remaining, and that's it, then yes, you can still look at the scar and say that's the scar, metaphorically speaking, but it's basically, you have gone beyond it, so it requires vigilance to discover in yourself the arising of stories around things, and the old stories that you may still carry in your mind, that gives you a false sense of identity, that strengthens the ego, it's so common that most people do it to a greater or lesser degree, so when you are present, gradually, perhaps even suddenly, you don't do that anymore, you relinquish the stories, and then a certain simplicity comes into your life, and your relationships become much easier, stories are even little things, when you tell somebody, oh, yesterday, you did that, but you should have done that, it can be

expressed even without that, without the should, yesterday you gave me that, could you from now on do that, the way in which you communicate can be done in such a way that you don't make the other person wrong, many years ago, I was staying with, in somebody's, when I didn't have a, I was actually writing, it doesn't really matter what I was doing, I was writing the beginning of the power of now, somebody offered me a room in his apartment, and he had three cars, and he said, you can have one of them, you can use it, I don't use it anymore, he would always buy the next more expensive car, because he got dissatisfied with the old one, so I got one of the old ones that he was dissatisfied with to drive around, and it was a beautiful car, a few years old, one day I left the car, and there was a signal when I closed the door, but I didn't realize why the sound was beeping, and when he realized the next day, well, I wanted to use again, and the engine wouldn't start, so it seems that the light stayed on, the sound was to invite me to the light, but why I'm telling you this is, he had done some spiritual work, and I was very impressed when he left me a note, because he got up before me, he left a note which said, the lights were on, and the battery got depleted, you need to call the triple A too, that's all, and I was very impressed by that note, because he didn't, a normal person who had not done any consciousness work would have said, you left the lights on, despite the fact that you must have heard the warning signs on the engine, so I was saying, well, this person has some awareness, he's not making me wrong, although it was my mistake, but he's not making somebody else wrong in the service of being more right than me, so that's a, it's a wonderful thing, also, of course, you may remember the stories, I, some stories in the power of now or the new earth, the Zen master who got accused of having fathered a baby, and again, the way he responded to the situation was without any story whatsoever, not making anybody wrong, just, is that so, that's an extreme example of non-reactivity to an event, so everybody got angry with him, he lost his reputation for a while, and all he would say is, is that so, you are the father of this baby, oh yeah, now he, this is not the only possible way of dealing with that situation, he could just have been, this is an extreme way of having no story, he could have said, no, I'm not the father of the baby, he can still present the facts, that's, I'm not, that's not the case that I'm the father, okay, and there still would be no story, so there's enormous power behind that, and also things resolve themselves much more quickly if you don't add the story to the event without the baggage, the resolution comes about much more quickly, the egoic self that adds a story to a simple event does not want a resolution, it wants a continuation of its assumed sense of superiority, in other words, you want the problem to continue, unconsciously, where consciously you say, I don't want this problem, I can't, I don't want to have to deal with these people anymore, that's what you say, but you do, because they help you feel superior, and of course, again, that's unconscious, so it's amazing what mind patterns humans are trapped in, forgive them, for they know not what they do, so it's your job to identify stories, and if you have any questions, please either, when we have questions in future sessions, ask them here, or put them in on a piece of paper, if you have any doubt about what is a story, and where does the fact end and the story begin, please ask, but I believe most of you are clear,

and you can identify stories in your mind, both the ones that arise spontaneously in situations, and the old ones, they are very important to identify, and there is a reluctance, if they have become part of your sense of self, there is a reluctance, there will be a reluctance in you to let go of them, I'm not letting go of that one, because then my sense of self will be partly collapsing, but that, of course, is a wonderful thing, because that is a false sense of self, you are not that victimized person, and you are not superior to somebody else, you are presence, so don't attempt to strengthen your form identity, that is there anyway, you don't need to strengthen it, the form identity, you might remember I wrote about, and sometimes speak about, you have two identities, one is the temporal identity, the conditioned identity of you as a person, temporal, of course, you have a certain lifespan, you as the person who has a body and a mind that has been conditioned by your past, and by your surroundings, and the past of the world that you grew up in, conditioned by many, many factors, including even your native language is already a form of conditioning, so you've been conditioned by that, it's the temporal self, and that's the form identity, and there is an essence identity, which is the timeless, formless consciousness, without which the form identity could not even exist, the form identity is not separate from essence identity, it's just a temporary form that your deeper essence, of which is consciousness itself, has taken for this lifetime, remember I used the analogy of the ocean, and the ripple on top, so your form identity is a ripple on the surface of the ocean, your essence identity is the ocean, when your mind becomes still, the thinking subsides, and only awareness is left, that awareness is the ocean, now sometimes people say, but don't you need the ego, the ego, you can't live here without the ego, the way I use the word ego, is ego meaning complete and utter identification with your form identity, nothing else, there's nothing else that you know about yourself, only you know yourself as the body and the conditioned mind, that's ego, form identity itself is not the ego, it's only form identity, so you don't have to get rid of your form identity, and say, I want to be nobody in particular anymore, no, you don't, that's not unnecessary, you honor, you can honor your form identity, it includes the physical body, it includes what you have achieved in this lifetime, it includes all the relationships that you have and have had, what you have experienced, it's all beautiful, you can honor, and you can have plans for the future, what you want to add to your form identity, I'd like to learn to play the piano, why not, you add this and that to your form identity, or I'd like to achieve that on the level of form, that's fine, but what is the foundation for your sense of self, the foundation for your sense of self, if that is the form identity, then that's ego, but if the foundation for your sense of self is your essence identity, which has no form, and is timeless, and it is what the Buddha called formlessness, which is a better translation than emptiness, sunyata, that is your essence, and you can know that here and now, the moment thinking subsides and you have not gone to sleep, thinking subsides, there's this little gap that arises in the stream of otherwise continuous stream of thinking, and this little gap is, there's a gap between this hand and this hand, so to speak, in your mind, and there suddenly you have this space of simple, what's left of you when you're not, you don't remember any story,

you're not thinking about anything, you're not even thinking about your name, or how old you are, why, and yet something is left of you, how do we describe that? A spacious sense of presence, stillness, inner stillness, beingness, a sense of I am without anything added to it, because usually I am follows, I am a man, I am a woman, I am a success, I am a failure, that's the form identity, so if you add something to I am, that's your form identity, but if nothing is added to that sense of beingness or presence, I am, this is the I am that has no form, this is why certain teachers recommend it as a meditation to ask yourself, who am I? That meditation fails when your mind comes up with an answer, it is not a puzzle that has an answer on a conceptual level, and you cannot solve the question, who am I, by thinking, let's see, I should just start thinking about that, no, you need to allow the question, and then the question can take you into beingness or presence, because who you essentially are is consciousness itself, who am I, I don't know, and you don't feel that you need to know or should know, become comfortable with not knowing who you are, if you are comfortable with not knowing who you are, then that makes it much easier to realize who you are beyond form, if you become uncomfortable with not knowing who you are, then you get fearful, I should know who I am, so there is a level of not knowing that's extremely important in your life, and that the ego does not like to go there, it fears to go into that not knowing, because it's not only that you don't know who you are on that level of consciousness, on that level of consciousness, conceptually, you don't really know anything, you can look at a tree in that way, as I mentioned yesterday, and don't know a single thing about the tree, while you look at the tree, but you can sense its presence, but that's not a mental concept, you sense its presence, you sense its presence, because it resonates or is one with your own presence, and that is the realization of oneness, when you can sense the presence, even of a tree, in order to sense the presence of the tree, you need to relinquish your knowledge about the tree, at least temporarily, it doesn't mean you don't completely forgotten, no, when you need it, the knowledge about the tree will be there, but if you are confined in your relationship to the tree, if you are confined to the knowledge that you have about the tree, that's extremely limiting, and this also applies to a human being, relating to other human beings, when all there is, when you relate to another human being, is your perspectives, your judgments, your opinions, about that human being, that's extremely limiting, you are not really relating to that human being, you're relating to your, the screen of mental concepts about that person, and this is how this huge obstacle arises in many, many relationships, because you never really meet the essence of that person, why can you not meet the essence of that person, because you have not met your own essence, you identified only with your form identity as a man or a woman, or whatever conditioning makes up the person, but if you have met yourself as the essence identity, and it's easy, here and now, what's left of you is still space of presence, it's your essence identity, and the more you surrender into that and allow it to be there, the more peaceful, deeply peaceful, but also there's a subtle sense of joy in that, that presence, it's to know yourself as consciousness is inherently joyful, not the ecstatic joy that goes, ah, I'm consciousness, it's a subtle, it's a very subtle joy, like a

distant sound, and this is the realization of being, and the realization of being is the realization of consciousness, the self-realization of consciousness, consciousness realizing itself, and that is joyful, being, consciousness, this, this is one traditional translation, sat, cit, ananda, sat is being, cit is consciousness, ananda is the joy, but there's a single thing, not three, there are three aspects of that realization, so that's the, it's so simple, so ego, ego is, if ever you have a discussion with somebody about ego, make sure that you're talking about the same thing, because I have met other spiritual teachers who said, I don't agree that we should get rid of our egos, we need our egos, and then I always say, okay, just a moment, what do you mean when you use the word ego, and then usually we resolve it because they mean something else, often what they mean is form identity, so you don't need to get rid of your form identity, but you need to transcend complete identification with your form identity, that is ego, and that is the spiritual awakening.

At any time while you're here on this retreat, if you engage in a discussion with somebody, some other participants about, probably about spiritual matters, hopefully not about what happens in Washington, but it could happen, again, be very, be aware, first of all, clarify your terms, and in any discussion, again, look for the need to be right, are you looking for the truth, or is the need to be right more important to you, and to the ego, the need to be right is much more important than the truth, because it will even distort the truth, it might, initially, you might both have been very interested in finding the truth about it, then the other person is proving you wrong, and then the ego in its attempt not to be annihilated will come up with anything to justify its position, it's quite amazing, so recognize in any conversation that you have, here particularly, pay attention, are you completely identified with the stream of the mind that is, you speak, that speaks through you, or is there a residual sense of spaciousness behind it, this is hard to describe, but you can always bring it in by attentive listening to the other, you can make sure to remain spacious if you can practice attentive listening in a state of complete openness, while the other person says, let's say, well, let's say you do happen to talk about politics, and the other person says something, the Republican Party is definitely the better choice, and then you're circled, observe that, are you able to listen to somebody else's viewpoint or perspective in that state of complete openness, that is not being drawn into the reactive conditioned mind, and you can have a real conversation with another person, because spaciousness is part of the conversation, and this brings us again, you might have noticed, by the way, I always talk about the same thing, only one thing, essentially, I can talk for hours, but ultimately and essentially, I'm always talking about only one thing, and it's not even a thing, so it's like approaching that core, approaching it from here, and approaching it from there, and you're approaching it from there, and you look around, and sometimes it looks something totally different, but then you realize, oh, it's still the same thing. So spaciousness, again, I pointed out briefly last night, how important it is if you work with people in whatever capacity, not to be completely taken over by whatever modality you use when you work

with people, not to become completely taken over by the knowledge that you have about what you do, because obviously you apply your knowledge, there's nothing wrong with that, that's part of the world of form, but if you get taken over completely by the accumulated knowledge, the forms, then what is lost in your relationship is that sense of spaciousness, so a vital question in any relationship, and even more so in the helping relationship, therapeutic, whatever you want to call it, a vital question is always be vigilant and say, is there space here, in addition to dealing with things on the level of form, is there still a sense of space within me and between us, and here, the space between us is awareness present, is stillness present in some way, and that is vital in therapeutic relationships, but it's vital in any relationship to have not a one-dimensional relationship with another human being, which is only on the level of form, but to have, to acknowledge the form level, to honor the form level, but not be confined to the form level, and that means, in addition to your knowledge that you have in your whatever work you do with another person, in addition to that, there needs to be something else, and that is, and that is almost contradictory to knowledge, because you need to be able to enter the spaces of not knowing anything, in between applying your knowledge, so you become still, even if it's just listening while the other speaks, you're not responding while you listen, you're not formulating the next question yet, there's open and spacious, attentive listening, and that is an energy field, that is the presence, that is the energy field of presence is suddenly there between you, and that transmits itself to the other also, and that is more foundational than anything else that you do on the level of form, you can be helpful to a limited extent, even on the level of form alone, but if you want a true therapeutic relationship with another human being, the presence needs to be there, the stillness needs to be there as part of the relationship, so in some kinds of work that you do, intuition may be important, if you are a counselor for example, or a therapist, then for a while you just apply, when you first start, you just apply what you have learned, you apply it through the therapeutic counseling situation, after a while you'll notice, you begin to go beyond what you have learned, and it takes sometimes years before a therapist has the courage to let go of what he or she has learned, even a psychoanalyst, which is a very mental thing, in some places psychoanalysis is still popular, Freudian psychoanalysis, I believe the two places where still psychoanalysis is still very popular is New York and Argentina for some reason, and even there, there are some psychoanalysts who after years of practicing are able, maybe they just don't want to listen to these continuous stories about people's past, and then at some point they just become present without even having a word for it, and then just go hmm, and then they begin to say intuitively out of that spaciousness, out of that stillness, they say things that they never learned, and then they never knew that they knew that, because they didn't know it until they said it, until the situation required this knowledge to come forth, and then you become a truly effective therapist when more and more intuition takes over, but intuition can only take over if you become comfortable with not knowing, instead of thinking immediately that you have the answer, or you're just applying the model that you have learned, and becoming comfortable with not knowing gives you

access to a much deeper knowing, almost paradoxically, it gives you access to intuitive knowing, which is primordial intelligence arising, and then it uses your mind, and then you speak, so the mind still has a purpose, because then suddenly, out of the stillness, the words come and say, oh, that's interesting, I didn't know that, what I just said, I didn't know it before I said it, it's there, that's beautiful, then there are modalities like, I don't know if it's still popular these days, I haven't done any reading in a few years, NLP used to be very popular, maybe still is, and if I remember correctly, that started by a couple of people who observed three extremely effective therapists, they were extremely good, whether they were hypnotherapists or something bordering on hypnosis, I don't know, they observed what they did, and they wrote down every detail, and all the things that they observed in these therapists was intuitive, the therapists just did it, after years of, they become so aligned with the present moment and the situation in the present moment, that even body movements that they did were totally intuitive, and totally right for that situation in that moment, and the people who developed NLP, if I remember correctly, started to observe how these people work with patients, and they made it into a system, the question is, can that really still be taught, something that was so vitally alive with those people, I won't go that way, I don't know, but the important thing is, is how vital it is not to become completely identified with your knowledge, so that you have both your knowledge and the space of not knowing, which is when the mind subsides and only this alert presence remains, so that is space in the relationship, is there space in the relationship, and this really applies to any relationship, but becomes even more important in the therapeutic relationship, it is certainly important in your relationship with your partner, wife, husband, children, family members, colleagues at work, in any situation, you have to bring spaciousness to the situation, in addition to the things that you know you have to talk about, and so on, so that the two dimensions of you are always present in any situation, you as the form identity, and you as the underlying unconditioned consciousness, the two, if there's only the unconditioned consciousness, then you would just become very, very still, and probably you wouldn't be able to deal with the situation, because you would just go, which is beautiful too, if that is your destiny, then it may well be that you just become you emanate presence, and you have to go to an ashram to live there, but for most, there's a balance between form and formlessness, so both of you, so to speak, need to be there, you as form, and you as your essence, that requires vigilance, the normal thing to happen is that the connectedness with your essence identity is lost very easily in human relationships, because the mind is so active, and we live in a civilization that provides continuous and incessant stimulus, stimuli is the plural, continuous incessant stimuli for the mind, even more than even 30 years ago, 30 years ago, it was just radio and television, and you would, people would sit there for hours, but nowadays you have countless sources of stimulus for the mind that draws you into continuously thinking about what's your next Facebook post, what's it going to be, and you look at the ones that are coming in, all these people are doing these fantastic things, and me, I'm just sitting here, and then you have to pretend that you're also doing fantastic things, then you project your self-image,

which has existed for a long, long time before in humans, they have a, they have this part of ego is to have this image of who I am, now we have the opportunity to project that image into the world, and it'll reach hundreds or thousands of people all at once, and then you construct your life, there are many people alive these days without knowing it, they partly live for their Facebook image, you might remember the myth of Narcissus, the Greek, ancient Greek myth, there was this young man who had never seen himself before, because they didn't have mirrors at the time, but one day he happened to look into a little pool of water, and he saw himself, and he realized that he was extremely beautiful, he said, oh that's me, and the story goes he fell in love with himself, not in a good way, not by becoming one with who he is, but the separation happened, this myth shows the beginning stage of the egoic sense of self, expressed as a story, the image that he saw of himself in the pool is the mental image of the ego, and stories are part of that image, that's me, I'm me and my story, so you have the image of me, and then, oh, so this guy, Narcissus, he experienced that separation, and then I think something bad happened to him, but I don't remember what, so and then you have other things that continuously stimulate the mind that almost designed for you not to become still, it's like the civilization has made a great effort to come up with as many things as possible to prevent people from becoming still and spacious, and taking a moment of sensing that stillness within, and of course, a minute later, another text message is coming in, of course you have to look at it immediately, I gave a talk last year at a conference, a big conference with people, business people, and so on, and they talked about how there's been articles in the paper too, how people's lives get taken over by their devices, they leave work, they go home, and the emails are still coming in, even in the evening, and they're still answering emails when they're in bed at night, and this is, some people are beginning to realize how dreadful that kind of life is, and some more enlightened companies, they may not be totally enlightened, but they're beginning signs of enlightenment, they even forbid you to answer emails after a certain time in the evening, they might even, some have even disabled your phones, and this is very wise, because otherwise, people will go insane, eventually, so there are great opportunities in this new technology also, but it's also very dangerous, there are both, you can spread messages of awareness, you can spread enlightenment through that also, it can travel, and incredible madness too, the essence then is the two dimensions, let's just put it like that, of who you are, balance them in your life and at work, and you will find inevitably, in certain situations, one will become stronger than the other, and then the situation changes, and the other will become stronger, when you have to deal with detailed information, conveying detailed information to somebody else, the mind has to be very active, you have to remember this, this and that, then the being dimension will recede, and perhaps you will be 80% in the mind, but then it's still possible to, even while that happens, to have that being dimension there, and other times when the mind is not required very much, the presence will come forth more, and there will be very little thinking, you will be filled with this wonderful sense of beingness or presence, when you're out in nature, for example, in critical situations, two things can happen, when

you're being challenged, by many challenges come through human beings, you might have noticed, most, well, there could be an earthquake too, but it's relatively rare compared to the challenges you get from human beings, and you can either lose spaciousness or presence, or the challenge can intensify spaciousness or presence, and this is a vital threshold, where you might be at in your evolution of consciousness, does a challenge, when it comes into your life, a challenge means a difficulty, a problem, a difficult person, a difficult situation, something going unexpectedly, something going wrong, so to speak, that's a challenge, now does that pull you into unconscious reactivity, so that you completely lose awareness of who you are beyond that situation, formless self, normal self, or does the challenge intensify presence, there comes a point in the evolution of human consciousness, and this is a wonderful thing, when you reach that line, from then on, whenever a challenge comes, presence intensifies and you go, and then you deal with the situation through presence rather than the egoic reactivity, until that happens, every challenge that comes into your life will pull you into unconsciousness again, you become reactive, you get upset, you get irritated, you get angry, whatever you turn, you shout back at somebody, you manufacture stories about situations to be superior to somebody else, so look at your own life and see how you, and this is a vital, can give you a reflection of where you are at in your spiritual life, how do you respond to the challenges when they come, from the little ones to the big ones, that's the critical line, how do you deal with challenges in your daily life, the little ones and the big ones, only you can know that, and it's very common for people to pretend that these things don't happen, or to justify them, they want to keep their mental image of that they are spiritual, and some even suppress emotions because you're not supposed to have negative emotions when you're spiritual, so I'm not angry, I'm just letting you know what I think, I'm not angry at all, why do you always accuse me of being angry, you should look at yourself, denial, so that you can keep your self-image intact, so it's how do you deal with challenges tells you how conscious you are, not so much whether you have visions of angels, or communicate with extraterrestrial entities, that is wonderful too, if you do that, it's great, but it does not determine how conscious you actually are, it might be an ability that's wonderful, but that can be used in the service of the ego too, if you're not conscious, so you may be in touch with Ashtar, commander of the galactic fleet, but how do you deal with when a plumber comes to repair your pipes and he does a bad job and charges you too much for it, our retreat of course is a wonderful opportunity to go more deeply into spaciousness, and also to some extent, practicing when you talk to people, practicing here, being spacious even while your mind is engaged, so that your consciousness is not completely drawn into the mind stream, so that you can speak, at first people can be present when they're sitting quietly, and then the next lesson is to be present when you start communicating with another human being, which is a huge step forward, more challenging than just sitting quietly in a room, as somebody said to me on a retreat, I got a, I think she spoke, also wrote, I can be present when I'm sitting alone in my room, I can be really present and still, but the moment I go out into the world, I lose it, this is why some people think if I could live in an

ashram, in a community, in a protected setting, in a way it's like, imagine that we are here and we are not going home anymore, while let's live here, let's all live together, wouldn't that be wonderful, I would come and visit you occasionally, although compared to the mainstream population, it is true that our group here embodies a more awakened state of consciousness than the one that is still normal in the world, that is undoubtedly true, but even though if you started to live together for a longer period of time, you would encounter many situations that would require you to be absolutely present, because ego would still surface, the best situation for most of us is to be out in the world and face the challenges of the world, there may be a good reason for withdrawing temporarily from the world for certain periods of time, if you have the chance or if you have that inclination, it's not absolutely important, yes, of course, in a way you're doing it here for a short period of time, you could, might be doing it for a few months, some people might do it for a year, if you can, but it's not vital, because you face, use the world and whatever the world presents you with as your spiritual practice, rather than hoping for ideal situations, so that you can really start practicing spiritually, because what the mind or the ego envisages as an ideal situation is not the ideal situation, the ideal situation is one that provides you with challenges, because without that, there's no awakening, that's the truth of it, so once you know that, you also know that life is meant to be challenging, it's not meant to be, oh, it's meant to be challenging, because that forces evolution to happen, it's challenging for every life form on the planet, every life form has its own challenge, and there would have been no evolution without life forms being challenged and being forced to evolve, and so you might have noticed that the universe brings you one challenge after another, and some people get very upset and despondent of this, why can't I want to, why can't life leave me alone, I want to, why is there always the next thing, just when I've achieved this, and I thought everything was fine, something else happened, everything was fine here, and then somebody crashed there, why is there never, because it's not, this is how it is meant to be, I have quoted before the first few lines in the book, the first line in the book, the road less traveled, says life is difficult, if we know that fact, that life is difficult, then it's no longer difficult, what does that mean, it means when you know that challenges are an important part of being here, an important part of your evolution, you no longer get reactive when the next thing happens, it goes wrong, you actually can say, oh, it's meant for you to show you something, it always reflects your state of consciousness and gives you an opportunity to go deeper, every challenge gives you an opportunity to go deeper, to be more awake, to let go of ego, so you can welcome all those things when they arise, in the same way that you welcome things going wrong when you watch a movie, as I mentioned last night, you wouldn't want to watch a movie when nothing ever goes wrong, the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean by a wonderful ship called Titanic, and everybody was happy until they all arrived safely in New York, and you can watch two and a half or three hours of people having a good time on the ship, that would not have been a successful movie, but here they're faced with the possibility of imminent death, how do people respond to that, what does that do to them, there's a challenge, and

that's why when you watch the movie you go, what's going to happen now, and in a good movie, the character evolves as a result of being confronted with a challenge, in a bad movie, the situation gets resolved on an external level, but there's no change in the character, eventually the criminal gets apprehended or killed and then you say, ah great, okay, so do you want your life to be a bad movie or a good movie, so if it's a bad movie then all your problems get solved on an external level by some deity perhaps, who just arranges and removes the problems from your life, and that's the end of the movie, or if it's a good movie, then you change as a result of being confronted with the challenges of life, you deepen, the ego is transcended, and who you are in your essence arises, that could be a significant shift in the way in which you experience life, when you no longer get upset when the next challenge happens, or if you do get upset, suddenly you notice that you're upset, and then you go, oh, isn't that interesting, I just, I missed the bus or the plane, and I got upset, for what, how important is that whole thing, missing a bus or a plane, on a universal scale, when there's a gravestone with my date of birth and date of death on it, and a dash in between, is that missed plane going to be very important, or a year from now, or a hundred years from now, and normally even remembers who I was, no, it's completely unimportant, I thought it was terribly important, isn't that interesting, sometimes being upset is fine too, that's part of the learning too, because then your awareness comes in at some point and says, oh, I can feel the upset, why, because I missed the plane, I have to wait here for another three hours or another night, and then you ask, I'm just giving one example out of hundreds, does it matter where you wait, where you breathe, you can breathe at the airport for the next three hours, or somewhere else, or you can sit on a plane, or at home in a chair, or at the airport in a chair, you sit, always sit somewhere, or stand somewhere, or lie somewhere, does it really matter when the mind, I should be home by now, what do you do at home, well, I would sit or lie or stand somewhere, or I would check my email, well, you can do that now too, a certain independence comes, you are no longer, there's a certain freedom from externals that begins to come in as you live more consciously, you are free of being totally, your inner state being totally determined by external conditions, and that's a wonderful sense of freedom, otherwise you're at the mercy of whatever happens out there, and things, as the Buddha already realized and told us, things are unstable in the universe, everything is changing, impermanent and in flux, continuous flux, so if you're dependent on things being stable, you get upset a lot of the time, if you're dependent on your inner state on things going as they should, you get upset and suffer, you suffer a lot, and the freedom comes when you can be with, immediately go with what is internally, oh, no longer construct a story about how unfairly the universe or somebody else has treated you, or how dreadful they are, none of that, just immediately align with the present moment, freedom from externals, wonderful, especially from unconscious people, because otherwise every unconscious person makes you unconscious, every angry person makes you angry, so we transcend, just a brief recapitulation in one minute, essence identity, I don't know if it's going to be one minute or 10, but that's, essence identity, form identity, the two, bring them together so that they are both there

in your daily life, form identity alone is ego, form identity with presence is just what it is, form identity, nothing wrong with it, you can see how religious people fight, different religions, why?

Because they're completely identified with their form identity, which if you're a religious person, your form identity is the particular form of your religion, and then another one is identified that brings their sense of identity is in that, it's collective, form identity is always partly personal and partly collective, so let's say two people meet, two religious men or women, a monk from a Christian tradition meets a Muslim man and they start talking, if they are both identified with their form identity, they will violently disagree and think the other is terribly wrong, if both are in touch with their essence identity, they would have a wonderful meeting together because they would immediately recognize the oneness, their own oneness, and the oneness that all their respective religions actually point to if they are understood at the deepest level, so you find that the disagreement between religious people happens because these people are trapped in their egos and the religion has become part of their sense of self, and you can still honor your religion, which is part of the form of life, if you have gone deeper into the essence of yourself, then you recognize the essence in your religion, and then you can meet somebody else and recognize that no matter what the outer form of their religion is, you realize you meet, you truly meet the other, so moment of stillness.

[Speaker 7] (2:33:57 - 2:34:06)

Our program continues with session three, Conscious Awareness Beyond Form and Thinking with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (2:34:21 - 5:08:35)

Most people around here know the famous saying, what Mark Twain said about San Francisco, he said, the coldest winter I've ever spent was the summer in San Francisco. The good news is, according to the weather forecast, the sun is going to come out shortly before sunset, and the other good news is it doesn't really matter what the weather is like out there, being independent of external conditions, not reactive to external conditions, accepting of external conditions because they already are, the isness of things here and now, that's the quickest way to inner peace, is to align yourself with the isness of what is, even if you think you can, it requires some action to do something about it, but in the meantime, it is, then you can do something, not about the weather, probably, you can try through focused power of consciousness, not impossible, but unnecessary, and that's also a quick way to not being burdened by unnecessary thinking, to align yourself with the isness, we are primarily here to deepen our realization of who we are beyond form. Both the Buddha and Jesus talked about an inner dimension that is formless, that you need to realize in order to become free of complete dependency on the forms that your life takes, the Buddha talked about what's

traditionally translated as emptiness, as the essential you, better translation would have been, now we've got emptiness in all the scriptures, it's been translated, but spaciousness or formlessness would have been a better translation, Jesus talks about the sky that's within you, that's another word for heaven, the kingdom of the sky, translated into modern terminology, the dimension of spaciousness, the kingdom of heaven is the old translation, this is hard to relate to nowadays, kingdom of heaven, but if he had been speaking today, he would have said the dimension of spaciousness, because when you look up at the sky, you see spaciousness, especially when it's not cloudy, the clouds kind of represent the thoughts in your consciousness, and the sky is the vast expanse without which there wouldn't be any room for the clouds, there couldn't be any clouds, so the empty sky is spaciousness, now an interesting thing about the sky is, although we have a word for it, it doesn't actually exist in the world of forms, because if you ever traveled upwards and wanted to encounter the sky, you would never find it, because there's no such thing as the sky really, so you can't say, oh, here's the sky, I'm touching it now, or you can't even say, I'm in the sky, where? It's just a way of perceiving the spaciousness, we call it sky, and the color blue appears because of the juxtaposition of the sunlight and the blackness of space behind it in some strange way, but the main thing is, there isn't a thing that's the sky, so very cleverly, Jesus used that, because he was trying to point to something that is very hard to point to, using concepts and words, so he chose the most suitable pointer in the language, in words, that he could find, and the most suitable one that he could find to point to this inner dimension that is in every human being, but ignored and unknown to most humans, so to point to it, he chose sky, because he realized, just like that inner dimension of spaciousness, you can never actually pinpoint it and say, I've got it, I have got it, there would already be a duality of it, the spaciousness, and I, but the spaciousness is the essence of I, so there's no duality there, you can never say, here it is, and this is another thing that he actually said, those are some things that you read in the New Testament, I can feel very strongly, he actually almost literally said that, then there are other things that were distorted when they started writing it down, and then there are other things that he never said, but somebody said it might be a good idea if he had said that, so the kingdom of heaven, you can never say, that's in a free translation, he said, you can never say, oh, it's over there, or oh, it's over there, look, here it is, you can never say that, because it is within you, in the same way, consciousness, which is what we are talking about, consciousness is the formless consciousness, that's the essence of who you are, it cannot become an object of knowledge, like everything else can, where you have, you are the perceiving or the acting subject, I see the chair, I realize it's consciousness, you can't really say that, because consciousness is the primordial subject of all experience, it cannot be an object in your experience, that's an interesting thing, so in the form identified consciousness, you become an object to yourself, in ego, you have a relationship with yourself, and when you realize the essence of who you are, you realize yourself as consciousness, which is not an object, it's the I, the most fundamental subject of all experience, an example, some people say, I'm looking for myself, I'm looking for my real self, I'm

looking for something more real than what I know about myself, there must be a deeper dimension, and I'm looking for it, other people might say they're looking for God, or for realization of God, looking for something, and when you become aware of the, that in you that's looking, without having found any answer, without having found anything, and you're still looking for that thing, God, your true self, where is it, I haven't found it, and then the mind stops, and then you realize all the consciousness behind the looking, is what you were looking for, but the consciousness became thought, and then you believe that there's something external to look for, this is very hard to put into words, but when the mind stops, what's left is just the spaciousness of consciousness, and that is the substratum, to use a geological term, of everything, of all experience, and that is the most liberating thing, the only truly liberating thing, is to realize, in essence, you are formless consciousness, and then all the seeking stops, you no longer need to look for your true self, or God, because you realize that is the essence, is now, you might say, you mean, you're then, do you then realize that you are God, I wouldn't put it like that, it's a little bit like you realize that you are, let's use an analogy, you are a ray of sunlight, and as this ray of sunlight, you've always been looking out here, so you are the little ray of sunlight, thinking you're an independent entity, with other rays of sunlight, everywhere around you, and they're all looking for things, and then the ray of sunlight, that considers itself to be an independent entity, autonomous, having certain relationships with other rays of sunlight, and even with itself, so me, becomes still for a moment, and then realizes there is a depth to who I am, that goes all the way back to the sun, but can only realize that when you stop thinking, then you become aware, the ray of sunlight, you become aware of your own depth, you don't, there's no end to you, there isn't this finite little thing, as the mind's, the thinking mind stops, there is a suddenly a depth, and in that, you realize that you are not a disconnected fragment that has been thrown into this universe by some malignant deity that enjoys your suffering, no, but that you are an essential part of the universe, you haven't been thrown into the universe, you have come out of the universe, and so in this analogy, you have come out of the sun, and as the mind stops, and then you can actually sense how far you go back, but there's no distance, you are actually never, never separate from the sun, the ray of sunlight realizes suddenly that it is still actually part of the sun, nor we can say where the sun actually finishes, because it's, it doesn't have a boundary, so the light that reaches us from the sun, one could say, is still part of the sun, it's, we are all within this vast energy field of the sun, this is an analogy, sun is the closest you can get in the sense-perceived universe to the source of all life, because in the sense-perceived universe, here, the sun is the source of all life, the very heat in your body comes actually from the sun, all the energy we use is stored up energy from the sun, and we, one day we'll find a way of using sun energy in a much more intelligent way than fossil fuels and so on, but that's another matter, so you realize, the sun, the ray of sunlight realizes that it's still connected to this vastness, to the source, and that's the self-realization of the ray of sunlight, that it was never separate and could not even exist as a separate entity, it's totally impossible, and then the ray of sunlight actually becomes a much more

peaceful and relaxed being while it's still there, I'm talking about you, of course, because you've realized without any needing to convince yourself of anything, or take up some new belief, no, through actual direct realization, you realize your connectedness with something very deep, so you're not just a little person, you're also the kingdom of heaven, or as the Buddha called it, spaciousness, sunyata, so there's two of you, and this is not an ultimate truth, ultimately there's only one, but let's just temporarily, it sometimes helps to have a certain perspective on things, there's two of you, that which expresses itself in form, the physical body and all the stuff that's in your mind and in your emotional field, that all that makes up the person, that has a limited lifespan, even if there's a continuation of that after the body dissolves, it has a limited lifespan because all forms, no form is permanent, so all forms are continuously changing, I would be dreadful if you survived as this personality that you are now, I mean, who would want to be the same personality for centuries and millennia, there's an evolution of consciousness, so the body is short-lived, that which is beyond the body may continue for a while as it continues on its journey of self-realization, but you are that which is the form identity, and more essentially, you are that essence identity, the two, and all the great spiritual teachings, all they do is point to the possibility for you to realize that there's more to you than meets the eye, to use an expression, what meets the eye is first when you see another human being, or you look in the mirror, or you look down yourself, what meets the eye is first the physical body, then what meets the eye, metaphorically speaking, when you meet another human being is their personality, the things, how they act, what they say, how they behave, that's already unseen, but it manifests in the scene, so it meets the eye, that's all the form of the person and your own form, and all spiritual teachings really come down to somebody trying to show you that there is another dimension to who you are, and whether they call it the kingdom of heaven that's within you, or the emptiness that's the essence of who you are, or in other teachings, the true self, in India, they talk about the true self, or the self, it's sometimes called, and then people who haven't had any, not even a glimpse of a realization, they may be religious scholars, they say that Hinduism, the Hindu talk of a true self, or the great self, and the Buddhist teachings of no self, is totally opposite, they don't realize that they're talking about the same thing from a different perspective, when Buddha talks about the unreality of the self, he's talking about the unreality of your form identity, the relative, the dreamlike nature of your form identity, and in order to get you to realize your essence identity, he talked about inner spaciousness, and what is meditation all about, that he taught, is to help you stop the mind, not as an active thing, but as a relinquishing, and then there's the spaciousness, and then you know who you are, without having any added concept in your mind to who you are, when we think of knowing who you are, we think you must know more about you, but that's not that knowing, if you want to know more about you, then you'd have to perhaps go to psychoanalysis, and then you can delve deeply into your form identity, and many things will come up, but eventually you'd have to go deeper beyond that, in order to be free of complete identification with form, so let me just remind you, that the essential practice is

to relinquish thinking, not by falling below thinking, but by rising above thinking, some of you are already advanced enough presence, there's enough presence power in you, that you can actually, by choice, say, there's nothing to think about, and I won't think for a while now, and then you can even do things in that state of complete inner alert stillness, prepare a cup of tea, and every moment happens against a background of alert stillness, walk from point A to point B, and every step happens against this background of alert stillness, look around you, whatever it may be, in a room or outside, perceive everything with your senses, and all the sense perceptions happen against this background of alert stillness, without any mental commentary, and you know what you're looking at, without imposing any mental label on it, when you look at a tree, you don't impose the label tree on it, but you know that you're looking at a manifestation of life, the moment you put a label on it, we, of course, we need labels on a certain level, but we also need not to be trapped in the labels that we have given things, we need to be able to use the mental labels when they are needed, but to be entirely trapped in the mental labels that we've given to everything, that's a dreadful limitation, because the tree is, everything is absolutely mysterious, everything is miraculous and mysterious, and when you put a label on it, a mental label, you think you know what it is, but you don't, it's just a mental label, so to really get to the inner realization of a tree, for example, you have to let go of the labels, then you can sense there's more to the tree than when you utter the word tree, than you think you know, but there's a depth to that, it's an alive being also, and I'm using just tree as an example, this is the practice, inviting presence, thoughtless awareness into your life as much as possible, and see how much more enjoyable things become, how you notice things around you that before were meaningless, you didn't ever look at them, you notice beauty in many places that would be called ordinary, not just beauty in things that are absolutely stand out, but beauty in seemingly unremarkable things, and aliveness in seemingly inanimate things, and that comes when you perceive the world against this background of alert, inner stillness, and that is, in those times, the personality recedes, occasionally, certain thoughts may come, and then they go away again, and then the spaciousness is back, so you will be amazed how, as you become more familiar with that state of alert stillness, how that changes how you experience life, so you no longer experience life only as that old person that you've been stuck with since you were born, that person is still, you honor that, because that's your form identity, and that person can also improve, it can learn things, it can improve in many ways, it can play in the world of form, but then the wonderful thing is, the formless self, or no self, and who you are as a person do not remain separate, there isn't that, there are times when you are completely in the formless, still, and alert, and then there are other times when you're involved in thinking, there's a possibility of bringing the two together, and that happens kind of naturally after a while, as you invite the alert stillness into your life more often, then you'll notice that even when you think, that you continue to be aware of the tiniest gaps in between your thoughts, like now, and then I speak again, and then there's another little gap, you're aware of the gaps between thoughts, and you're aware, so to speak, also of a

background to all thinking, that the alert stillness is still there, and then you could engage in a discussion with someone without losing yourself in the stream of thinking, of mind, and without identifying with any mental position, which is seeking your identity to reinforce, to strengthen your identity by defending your mental position about something, you don't need it anymore, because you realize no mental position is your true identity, you can still have mental positions, but without the self in them, so there's no longer a sense of me or self in your mental, you can, why not keep your opinions, everybody has certain perspective on things, you have a certain perspective on whatever, politics, philosophy, spirituality, that's fine, but you don't, you're not looking for an identity anymore in being right about something, it still put forward your viewpoint, because you're in touch with a more essential identity, and that's the stillness behind your thinking, and in between the thoughts, so you can sense an alertness even while you speak, in the background and in between, so the two dimensions come together, and so the way in which you use your mind changes, in fact, you're now able to use your mind, you as the consciousness, the mind is connected, linking into that deeper dimension of no thought, which is primordial intelligence, it's where all creative insight comes from, and then your mind becomes a much more helpful tool, and it can create, it can manifest things, but what it manifests comes from the consciousness, rather than a little person that thinks, I need to manifest this or that in order to be happy, and of course, once you have manifested it, you're happy for a little while, and then you're unhappy again, needing something else to manifest, and now I need this, okay, I've got the house now, now I need the relationship, and then I need that, and then I need to be recognized by people, and there's no end to it, and the more you have achieved on the level of form, the more you realize that that's not it, so the two dimensions of you, here we are primarily concerned with the formless dimension, because that's what spirituality is about, there are many other things where you can go to workshops to learn how to improve your form identity, how to strengthen that, you can do it, yeah, yeah, and that's fine too, that has its place also, you could go to that kind of workshop, as long as you're in touch with something deeper, you can try it, I'm still planning to have a joint event together with Tony Robbins, but my idea about it, I don't know if it will happen, is that we would both exchange our positions so that we are not in our comfort zone, uh, I, I, he would be sitting in a chair, and I would be pacing up and down and gesticulate, and I wonder if that, that position would change our teachings, so we'll see, so there is a place for manifesting on the level of form, because the universe is manifesting continuously on the level of form, so if we realize that we can manifest things on the level of form, that's a wonderful realization through the power of thinking, the question is, do you know yourself only as form, or do you know yourself also as the formless? If you know yourself also as the formless consciousness, then actually what happens is, the formless consciousness inspires you to manifest certain things, not the ego anymore, the ego says, I need this to be happy, and then I need that to be happy, and then I need to get rid of that to be happy, but if the, that primordial intelligence, if you are in touch with that as your essence, that can inspire you, your mind, to manifest what it wants to

manifest, so then, because the universe delights in manifestation, as you can see when you look at the life forms on this planet alone, in the sea, I don't know how many different life forms in the sea alone, and on land, and in the seen and the unseen, the universe must delight in creation and exploring, and every life form is an expression of the one consciousness exploring the universe that it created in different ways, the fly that's flying around here is another expression of the one consciousness, and really is another universe, the fly doesn't experience the universe that we experience, it's in the same place, but experience something different, as the one consciousness, all these temporary forms, that's the Leela, the divine play of forms, what in India is called the Leela, the divine play, and we can participate in that divine play, become co-creators, and that is part of our destiny, that a point comes, will come, when human consciousness will be able to manifest forms very easily, even now it can be done, a time will come when we don't need to make anything anymore with our hands, we can just go, oh, there it is, but at that point, we are not going to create countless stuff, because without the stuff, we can't be happy, we would probably create simple things, because we don't need stuff to complete us or to make us happy, so there is the creation of the universe, I call that the outgoing movement of the universe into manifestation, and then there is the ingoing movement of the universe, the universe also wants to know itself, its own essence, and it does that through you, and through me, how do I know all this? I know this because I have observed the two movements within myself, and I am a microcosm of the macrocosm, you can discover all the secrets of the universe by looking into yourself, so I can find within myself the, sometimes, the desire to create and to manifest, and then there comes a seemingly contradictory desire to return to the source, to become still, you don't need anything anymore, you just are totally, totally at peace in that beautiful stillness, that's the return, the universe realizes itself as the underlying formless consciousness, when you realize the underlying formless consciousness, that is the essence of who you are, it's not really you realizing it, because you are only the universe appearing temporarily as this particular person, but it's only a temporary appearance, so when you realize your own essence as consciousness, that's, the universe is realizing its own essence as consciousness, because you are the universe, you are an essential part of the universe, so there is no personal realization, really, there's universal realization, it's a miraculous thing, so the universe wants, it's seemingly contradictory things, there's a cycle, it seems, perhaps scientists have had some glimpse of the truth when they say, the universe expands, and then at some point, it starts to contract again, and then at some point, it disappears into the no thingness, out of which it all came, so it goes, it's like the heartbeat, or the in-breath and the out-breath, the universe goes into multiplicity, creation, billions and billions, count trillions of life forms, and that's also, there's a cycle for humans, too, when they go out, and then comes the cycle of returning home to the source, but if you hadn't gone out, you wouldn't realize your own source, so they depend on each other, creation and the outgoing movement and the return movement, and you can find that in your own life, it may well be that we are drawn to the return movement of self-realization as consciousness, because the

universe is beginning to go in that direction, after billions of years of creation, and then comes a period, and this would be a miraculous period on this planet, on many other planets, when humans, as expressions of the one consciousness, are in connection with a source, while they are engaged in creation, rather than, as it happens until very recently, losing yourself in your creations, losing yourself in the mind, losing touch with the source of who you are, and losing yourself in stuff out there, your mind primarily, and thinking everything else is out, all the answers are out there, and this is, you're fighting out there against this and that, and this is a dream, the dream of consciousness, the dream of the universe, and the universe wanted to experience, in order to really experience the dream, you need to believe that it's absolutely real, so it needs to go out there and lose itself, and every life form, then to some extent, the humans mostly see themselves as totally separate against all the others, it's part of the dream, and then the dream gradually comes to an end, and then the awakening begins, and in the middle of the dream, you start to realize something, oh, the source, and you become still, and an awareness arises, and that spiritual awakening for the human being, and it's a spiritual awakening for the universe, your spiritual awakening is the spiritual awakening of the universe, and then the awareness comes, and then you begin to live with awareness, rather than losing yourself in every mind form, in every perception, in every drama, lucid living, it's a bit like we all know about lucid dreaming, which happens when in the middle of a dream at night, you suddenly know, oh, this is a dream, this is quite an interesting realization, for most people, it doesn't last very long, because wakefulness and dream are not that compatible, so then you have perhaps only a few seconds, you can say, this is a dream, I couldn't make anything happen here, and I know, because I know it's only a dream, what am I going to do now? So that's lucid dreaming, but here we have, as the awareness arises, which we call spiritual awakening, you can have lucid living, which means you're still participate in this ultimate dream of form, the dream of life, and yet you're aware of your own essence, as the timeless space, without which there couldn't be any dream, it's the very condition for any dream even to exist, that's lucid living, when you're not drawn totally anymore into all the creations of your mind, you're able to play with it, and that would bring, when more humans are able to live in that way, then we can engage in joyful creation of things, not the neediness, joyful creation, enjoy the beauty and multiplicity of the universe, and of our own creations without self-seeking, which is of the ego, so we no longer create in the service of the ego, but as expressions of the one consciousness, delighting in conscious creation, and that's already part of the return journey, but all this is just, I'm saying this just to point to the fact that the change in consciousness that's happening in you is a universal movement, it's not just a personal thing, it would not happen if it were not part of a larger movement, universal movement of awakening, so there are probably countless life forms awakening elsewhere in our galaxy, and many other galaxies, and some probably started to awaken a long time ago, who would now look at us as, oh, these poor little things, they're only just beginning, that's okay, now, not each one of you, not every one of you is able to yet step into no thought, without some kind of help, and meditation is designed to help you

with that, but as you probably know, the main thing I recommend is to have some attention in the inner energy field of your body, and that keeps thought at bay in a gentle, non-violent way, not willpower, it involves no willpower, so it involves just a decision that right now you would prefer to be alert and still and not be thinking, and that decision you could arrive at because you've realized that, let's say, for the past hour, you've been engaged in futile, useless thinking that all it did was make you unhappy, and suddenly the awareness is there again that had been temporarily lost, and you say, what's all this futile thinking about, it's just making me unhappy, it has no point whatsoever, and then a decision comes to not to think, because you realize there is another dimension in you that is deeper than thinking, so you, okay, I'd rather be there than up there in the mind, and how can I get there, because the mind will have its momentum, so unless your presence power, so to speak, is already quite developed, you may find it very hard to stop the momentum once it started, to stop the momentum of thinking, there's an enormous pull, a gravitational pull behind it, and for some, if presence power is not yet that developed, you can say, I need to stop thinking, but I can't, because it goes on and on, and I can't stop it, it's like a river, you can't get out of this raging river, it drags you along, just try, especially when you're stuck in a train of negative thinking, or fearful thinking, or angry thinking, you don't even want to get out, because you're so identified with a stream of thinking that your sense of self is in it, and you don't want to lose that sense of self, it's a fictitious sense of self, but it's a sense of self, and so you don't want to stop your train of angry thinking, you want more angry thinking, and if possible, you're looking for more feedback from others to reinforce your angry thinking, I need another argument, and after you've walked back out of the room, after a one-hour argument, you walk back into the room, because you haven't had enough, you need to talk to that person again, oh, one more thing I want to tell you, and even when that person is no longer there, you're still thinking, and then you need to pick up the phone and tell your friend about it, and then you repeat the whole argument you just had, and how right you are, and how wrong the other person was, and then when you hang up the phone, it still goes on in your head, and at that moment, to tell somebody you need to stop thinking would be futile, the person doesn't even want to stop thinking, because that person is thinking, total identification with thought, so there needs to be a realization, some awareness needs to be there, it's totally pointless to talk to anybody about stopping thinking without having at least some access to awareness, maybe not in the moment of enormously empowered thinking, empowered not in a good way, but the awareness needs to bear that what's going on inside me right now, and then at some point you might be able to realize what's happening to you, it's happening to you, you didn't actually do it, it just happened to you, because you're being possessed by your mind, and then at some point you realize that there is a choice, you can actually, perhaps not when you're in the middle of it, at some point a very strong mind stream subsides, you might get tired of it, and then it goes, and then finally you go, oops, oh, and then do I choose to carry on, is that, does it make me feel happy? No, it doesn't, I thought it did, because I felt so good to be angry about that, but it's not, doesn't make

you feel, the body doesn't really feel, if you asked your body it would tell you this feels horrible, but of course if you're not in touch with your body, you're only up here, you don't even know that, and then at some moment the choice comes in, and so at other moments the choice may come much more quickly, because it's just the usual stream of futile, in the middle of the night you wake up, the usual stream of futile thinking, and then awareness comes in, there's a choice, and then a decision comes, and that decision is just no willpower, it's just a decision, I'd rather be still than not be thinking, and once you know that, then you can take your attention into the inner energy of the body, that's your choice, instead of giving more attention to your thinking, you just take your attention into the inner energy field of the body, and suddenly you feel the aliveness that pervades the entire body, and so you have taken consciousness away from the mind, and put it in here, and you can't think that much anymore, you can't feel the body and be engaged in a lot of thinking, and if you really fully experience the aliveness in the inner body, the mind stops, and so that becomes an anchor for awareness, an anchor for presence, even if you cannot feel the entire body, it would be enough to just go into your hands with your attention, just take consciousness into your hands, and feel the aliveness in your hands, that alone can take attention away from useless thinking, and you continue to feel, because that is part of experiencing the present moment, which actually feels quite good, it feels good to be alive, that's an amazing realization, so inner body, or even just a part of the body, the totality of the body is best if you can, it's not that difficult, you start with one part, hands, and you, can I feel my feet also, yeah, I can feel hands and feet, can I feel my legs, yeah, a little bit less, but, and then the totality of, oh, okay, I got it, you might also notice that you're breathing then, which is the other way, it can be combined with body awareness, but breathing is the other way of taking attention away from the mind, the most ancient meditation method is breath awareness, because breath awareness takes attention away from thinking, but keeps you alert, and breath happens all the time, and breath is virtually formless, so it's easier to get in touch with a formless consciousness by placing attention on the formless breath, other meditation objects are clearly defined in form, you can have an object that you focus on, you can have a mental object that you focus on, you can have a mantra that you focus on, those can work too, but they are more clearly defined in form, the breath is a kind of, where is the breath, you can't say, here it is, it's semi-formless or formless, so to place attention on that, which can also automatically bring you in touch with the body, the in-breath, the out-breath, it's so beautiful to have attention on your breath and the out-breath, and immediately your mind becomes still, so you can either be thinking or can have your attention on your breathing, but you can't have both, the moment you think, you're not aware of your breath anymore, and that also really applies to the inner body, to have full attention in the inner body, you can't be thinking, so those two things, which are really closely linked, breath awareness, you can make it into a meditation, so you can sit in meditation, and then you can observe the in-going and out-going breaths, you can also observe the gaps between the in-going and out-going breaths, you breathe out, breathe gap of nothingness, and then you start breathing in again, a brief gap of neither

in nor out, and the cycle continues. I read somewhere that the Buddha said, if you're aware of your breath for one hour, I don't know if they even had hours at the time, but if you're aware of your breath for one hour, you'll be completely enlightened, but if you lose it, you have to start from the beginning again, just one thought coming in, okay, start all over. Okay, I can see one or two of you saying, I'm going to do that.

We were going to have questions this morning, but of course, the present moment is unpredictable, so we would certainly have questions, as certain as one can be about something to come, in the next session, there's one or two things that I wanted to add to from last night, and I realized when I looked at the questions after the last night session, that I had not fully answered this question, I am a therapist, and I now feel that I don't take people's problems seriously, I don't know if I can continue to be a psychotherapist, okay, you may remember the essence of the answer I gave, and that is, I also find myself, when I listen to people's problems, a smile arises sometimes, not because of their problems, but because I'm in touch with a deeper reality, where their problems are relatively unimportant, and to be in touch with that deeper reality is liberating, and there is a joy in there, in knowing who you are beyond your problems, there is still, there is that joy that's there, and I can feel the reality for that person beyond their problems, and that is, I'm not laughing or smiling at them, but at the relative unreality of their, relative unreality of their problems, so, and that is actually a form of healing, so if that is the case with you, then you can continue to be a psychotherapist, you're not just, you can continue to listen to their problems without giving their problems this absolute reality, a relative reality, yes, but be in touch with that level deep within, where there is no problem, where that person is already complete and whole, and that is the formless consciousness, every form identity is not complete, it never has a feeling of being complete and whole, there's always stuff missing in your form identity, and there are things that didn't go according to what you imagined when you were young, and how did you imagine your life to unfold, well, you had all kinds of ideas, in many cases, that didn't quite happen, and then people come and say things like, oh, I would have imagined, when I was, I imagined my life to unfold very differently from the way it did unfold, it's really a sad story, and I feel I haven't, my form identity is really, there's so much still missing in who I am, there's so much that I could have achieved, but things happen to stop me from achieving it, and then there's that stuff that I did achieve, and it all came to nothing, it dissolved, I tried so many things, but why didn't I, why didn't I succeed in this or that, or if you did succeed greatly in this or that area, you go, why was I, why am I still so restless and unhappy, I've had, everybody thinks I'm so great, and I've got all these fans on Twitter and Facebook, why am I still, why am I still unhappy, why do I need more of this or that, even though my picture is in People magazine, and other magazines that are not that great, so whatever it is, there's always something wrong with your form identity, and if you think everything is right about your form identity, it won't last for very long, then you happen to just have hit a period, a brief period, when you feel it's all, everything is going great in my life, I've got a great place to live, I've got

a great relationship, I've got a great job, I've got a great income, I have a great car, and people recognize my importance, they tell me I'm a VIP, everything is great, that's how life should be, now it is possible for human to, for brief periods to be in that place, but they would be quite brief, because life just isn't like that, it is designed for things to go wrong, no matter how much positive thinking you do, which is all good, but no matter how much positive thinking you do, there is this thing designed into life, it's a, we could call it a sabotage element, of sabotage or disruption, in which universal intelligence has built into everybody's life, you might have noticed it, but you, what you might not have noticed is that it is built into everybody's life, and you might have thought that life singled you out to sabotage your life, because some people are very good at hiding the, that element in their life from others, and they wouldn't even admit it, that at night they lie in agony and, or whatever it is, so that's an interesting fact, once you know that this disruptive thing is built into your life, then you may come to actually accept that fact, that that is a universal thing that every human is meant to face, so there's always in some area of your life, there's always some disruption happening, or just happened, or happened a few years ago, but still leaving a lot of traces around, and you're still influencing the way in which you experience life, and then the next thing comes in, and the next, and once you've resolved your financial problems, and you're okay there, finally I've got financial security, and suddenly a health problem comes up, or the other way around, or the great job, you suddenly have this wonderful fulfilling job, and suddenly your company gets taken over by another company, and suddenly you're told we don't need you anymore, who am I now without that, you all know examples from your own life, and with some of you, it seems to be just a succession of things going wrong, but they can't have gone that wrong if you are sitting here now, because it's taken you to a spiritual awakening, nobody would go to a spiritual awakening, well, nobody I know, without experiencing the unsatisfactory nature of one's life situation, so I am grateful to that in my life, and you can be grateful to that in your life, because otherwise the evolution of consciousness would not have happened, if you had been totally happy all your life, no evolution is possible, no development is possible, no deepening is possible, you would be dancing on the surface of things, let's have another drink, and good food, and watch another good movie, and sensory pleasures, and sex, and let's travel, and go to another place, and explore that, and isn't that nice, and just no depths whatsoever, of course you would be incapable of compassion, or empathy with other human beings, you would have no deep insights, which all come out of suffering, just surface existence, but fortunately very few humans, or no humans have that, and if they had it, that would become the disruptive element, the fact that there is nothing disruptive, would become the disruptive element in your life, so on the level of form identity, you never arrive at complete satisfaction, you can't, I can't get no satisfaction, and once you realize that, you're actually, it's liberating to know, okay, you can still try to improve your life, it's wonderful thing, of course you try to make your life better, if you're not happy where you live, if you can find a better place to live, or if your health is not well, maybe you can do something about it, maybe you can't, if you can't

do something about it, take action, but the foundation for action needs to be present moment acceptance of the isness of now, and then you take action, but the, it will never be totally satisfying, therefore the only satisfying thing is to realize that there is another dimension to who you are, and that's where all satisfaction comes from, the realization that there's more to you than the person, the personality, and the personal history, and that is consciousness, you are, in essence, timeless consciousness, knowing yourself as timeless consciousness is the only true, truly satisfying thing that can ever happen in your life, and once you know yourself as timeless consciousness and sense this in the background of your life, so to speak, then your form identity and all the various situations that you encounter in your life are no longer that frustrating, because you no longer look to the various situations that you encounter in your life for ultimate satisfaction, you know that they cannot ultimately satisfy you, and therefore, because you're neither looking for ultimate satisfaction, nor are you looking to the various situations in your life, relationships, possessions, achievements, nor are you looking to these things to have a more complete sense of who you are, a sense of self, you know that it doesn't work, it cannot give you that, and you don't need it anymore, because your sense of self is rooted in something deeper, and then you can enjoy the play of forms without making demands upon it, the world, situations, without demanding that they should fulfill you or tell you who you are, and then with that sense of freedom, you can enjoy the phenomena in your life, you can enjoy a relationship, you enjoy visiting a new place, and if the weather is not the way you had wanted it to be, I came all the way to California thinking I could get to not only go to the retreat, but also have a little bit of vacation in the sunshine, and look what I get, the sky looks like November sky in London, and why did I spend all this money coming all the way out here, but so, and the other possibility is to arrive and say, oh, this is what is, and it's never quite the way you imagined it, you always get a surprise, sometimes it's a nice surprise, and sometimes it's a different kind of surprise, but no situation can actually satisfy you for very long, when you look to it for satisfaction, when you no longer look to a situation for satisfaction, it's actually quite nice, so you can enjoy life when you don't need things to be satisfying, you can actually enjoy, this reminds me that I'm told that quite a few people have not arrived here yet, because we're booked to come here, because there were many, many flights were canceled, because some computer hacking thing happened, talking about sabotaging things, computers for airlines got hacked, or something like that, and quite a few people still haven't arrived here, and this is another example of how life sabotages things, and that is a pity, and some may still arrive, and that's fine, and some may not arrive, and then that becomes, if they are not looking for satisfaction, then that could be a great thing too, I was going to go to this spiritual retreat, and something, I never made it, that would be, I had somebody years ago, we were going to have a retreat in the States, here somewhere, no, was it in Canada, and he arrived from Hong Kong, and when he arrived for the spiritual retreat, he got arrested, at Vancouver airport, and so they put him in prison, and then for the duration of the retreat, he was actually in prison in Vancouver, and approximately when the retreat finished, they released him, and now

why he was in prison seems that it goes back many years, there was a disagreement that he had with the IRS, which is the tax authorities here in the States, he had a business in the States, and there was the IRS, they don't, they're not compassionate it seems, but that was, I'm not sure if he realized it, but that potentially is a more profound retreat, I have one other example to tell of a similar thing that happened many years ago, not similar, but related, I mentioned before this Buddhist monastery in England that I sometimes visited to talk to the monks, and I already told you the story of this man who was giving me a ride, and who was a very committed Buddhist, he got extremely angry while he was in a driving situation, now this was another occasion a few years later, when I said to a friend of mine, who became interested in Buddhism, I'll show you this Buddhist monastery, we can drive there together, he had just bought a car, we were graduate students at the time, and his parents wanted to make him happy, so he bought this red BMW brand new, and a lot of his sense of self got suddenly invested in that, and halfway to the Buddhist monastery, we got stopped at a traffic light, a car from behind drove right into his car, and there was one other passenger, his girlfriend who got whiplash, but otherwise we were okay, but the car was basically a write-off, and that was a deeper lesson in Buddhism than he could ever have had, much deeper than he could ever have had in a monastery, because he was identified with the car, his sense of self was in this, a relatively young person can happen, so it was painful for him, and I pointed out that it was a potentially very useful lesson, I don't remember whether he got it or not, but he did say to me once, I wish I had never met you, because then I, he didn't mean it totally, because he added, I would be happy in my ignorance, of course he wouldn't be happy, so sometimes the unexpected is the greatest lesson, and often the unexpected thing going wrong, if you can surrender to that, is often the greatest lesson, and so these things do tend to happen, so just wait for the next thing, don't expect it, just know when it comes, say, oh, there it is, and you can say, oh, that's great, something else going wrong, isn't it wonderful, there's a disruption again that life puts in there, the strange thing is, when you surrender to that, it tends to dissolve much more quickly, when you resist it internally, the disruption stays in place, the sabotage element stays in place, when you surrender to it, very often the situation suddenly resolves itself, and you're free again, until the next challenge happens, let's take a moment of stillness, a few more minutes of stillness, if you are still thinking, remember, put your attention on your breath, or the inner body, or both, so as part of our session this morning, we may spend a little bit longer in stillness than we have done before, some of you will love it, and a few of you may become a little bit restless, if we go on for too long, but I promise you, we won't go on for too long, many of you probably have a meditation practice, I don't usually talk about formal meditation, but it's wonderful if people have a formal meditation and practice it, this is more about bringing the so-called meditative state into your normal life, presence, meditation is an attempt to become present, sometimes it works, sometimes it remains an attempt, for years, and you can become a good meditator by sitting for an hour every day, and all you're still doing is attempting to become present, meditation can be helpful, it can also become an obstacle to being

present, because almost inevitably when you meditate, you have this underlying assumption that you are doing something, you're doing a meditation, and in that doing the meditation, you're trying to get somewhere, for example, trying to become still, and so trying to become still is having a projection of a future place that you want to get to, and there's an underlying sense that you are doing something, you could even put it in your schedule, you can say at such a time you're meeting someone, meeting, committee meeting at 11, meditation at 12, and so there's just another doing, whereas the true meditation involves no doing, but simply the essence of it is the realization of being, so you can relinquish all doing, when you have a meditation technique, which may be helpful, but if it's not used rightly, it becomes part of your doing, and then it can actually stop you from the realization of being, which is already here now, you don't need to, nothing needs to be added to realize that you are now to realize your own being, so often when you meditate, the underlying assumption is that something needs to be added, you need to become good at it, you need to succeed at it, you need to, and that in itself becomes a hindrance, so in Zen, very often, they don't give you any technique, they just go, now sit here, and you won't get up again for three hours, and so and then you say, well, what do I do? Just sit, and in Zen, when they use the word sit, they usually mean meditate, so when you arrive in a Zen monastery, they greet you, and they might say, how long have you been sitting?

Oh, I've been sitting for 15 years, and then when you sit in Zen, there may be other similar traditions, it's not comfortable, because it gets very painful for the body, unless you're extremely flexible, which I'm not, and most people are not, so if you sit for two or three or four hours or all night facing a wall, they love doing that, and then they open the windows, although it's freezing cold, so they create very unpleasant conditions for your meditation, and not only that, the instructor or master may walk around and hit you when he sees that you're dropping or falling, yet you suddenly feel, with a little cane on your back, and then you have to thank him, but it doesn't, they don't give you a technique as such, and they just watch, you might say, watch your breath, but really even that, often they just say, just watch what arises, thoughts and emotions will arise, and the longer you sit, the more powerfully thoughts and emotions will arise, and the thoughts and emotions will say, get me out of here, how could I have been so mad to come here? And then you start thinking about, what excuse could I give? I could pretend to be really sick suddenly.

So in other words, and then they create conditions that are designed, one could say almost, to produce suffering without actually injuring yourself, they don't go that far, but they are conditions designed to produce an enormous amount of suffering, and so you sit there, facing your own suffering and an enormous amount of resistance, and then if it works for you, at some point, you come to the realization that the suffering is not produced by the conditions, which cannot be described as pleasant, but are as they are, but the real suffering is the resistance to the conditions, which happens on the level of

thinking, plus emotions that reflect the thoughts. So you become aware of yourself as the resisting entity, and realize you've come to a point where you can't stand being there anymore, then either you leave or you break through to surrender, and you suddenly let go of any thought about it, and then the emotion subsides too.

When you're no longer telling your body that this is terrible, then eventually the emotion that reflects the thought that this is a terrible place to be, and the emotion also subsides, and then all that's left is the conditions of that moment, which are pain in the body, pain in the neck, or wherever else, and a cold and some hunger, there you are, and then it's possible to break through to a deeper level where suddenly, despite the conditions of that moment, you feel peace, because your mind has stopped commenting in any way. But your mind is not even trying, if your mind is saying, this is really good for you, you should be liking this, that doesn't really work. So your mind is not trying to go to the opposite of from where it was first, where it said, this is awful, where your mind simply surrenders completely, and so it doesn't say anything anymore.

And this is to repeat something that happens to, can happen to a human being naturally by being faced with the challenges of life, which can pile up, and your life situation, as I call it, which means all the circumstances of your life can become so unpleasant and painful that you can't stand the suffering anymore. And that is a wonderful point to reach, not being able to stand the suffering anymore, because at that point, you may realize, not just conceptually, but deep to every fiber of your being, that the suffering comes from the resistance. The resistance happens on the level of the mind.

And so it happens to people naturally that when faced with unpleasant life situations, they suddenly can't stand it anymore, and something in them surrenders, which means the mind subsides. Without the mind creating thinking, all that's left is really the present moment. That's the awakening into the present moment, which is more likely to come when things are not going well than when everything is totally fine.

You may be at a point, most of you, where you don't need the suffering anymore to be pushed into surrender, because that's what life is trying to do. It gives you all the challenge, and eventually you have to surrender. But there is another wave, and perhaps you're here because you've already had enough suffering.

You can voluntarily choose it even without having to be pushed into surrender through suffering. So you can choose to relinquish thought, for example, which otherwise a human being would always do, and even then only a minority, would only do facing extreme conditions in their life. And here, some humans have reached this, the level of consciousness where they no longer need to be faced with extreme conditions.

Although if you were, and if you are here, because at some point in your life, you were faced with extreme conditions, then obviously that's a wonderful thing because that brought you here. And now here you realize, for the further evolution of your

consciousness and the emergence of presence through you, you don't need more suffering because you now voluntarily are able, and this is the evolutionary leap forward for humanity, when a human being can do that, can relinquish thought by choice and simply say, I'll be present now. And you can let go of resistance if you still notice resistance arising in certain conditions in your life, you can very quickly notice it.

Anytime you get upset about anything, that is actually quite helpful. Don't fall into the trap of thinking, why am I getting upset? I should be spiritual enough not to get upset about these things.

Why have I been going to all these classes and workshops? Why can't you? You know, the voice in the head, you can talk to yourself, why do you still do that?

Why can't you? And then the other you says, well, I'm trying, I've been trying. And then the other one says, well, you're not trying hard enough.

And then at some point you realize it's the voice in the head that this time has split itself in two, as I believe in one therapy, more doubt it's called the top dog and the underdog. And so you have a discussion with yourself. One says you and the other one, yeah, I couldn't help it.

But of course it's all, it's the voice in the head and even having that inner dialogue with yourself is a form of suffering. It's in a conflict and it's simply produced by the voice in the head, which sometimes seems to be two voices in the head. Sometimes even three.

And sometimes, of course, as you well know, sometimes the voice in the head is your mother's voice. Eat your vegetables. But that would be relatively harmless.

But it says many other things probably. But whatever voice it is, it's the voice. So you recognize when you get upset, you recognize the mechanism behind it.

It was resistance, mind, mental, emotional resistance to the present moment. You lost presence. And at that moment, when you notice upset any kind of upset, that can be a little alarm bell and says, oh, you lost the present moment.

You lost presence. And at that moment, you can have presence. It's here already.

So becoming upset can be very helpful if you know how to use it. If you don't know how to use it, then the upset is something that is unconscious and operates in you and makes you unconscious. But if you know how to use it, it's very helpful.

It can always bring you back into the present moment and acceptance of the present moment. And it's amazing what things people get upset about. Many very unimportant things can create upset.

You might have noticed. But at the moment of being upset, you don't know that these

are unimportant. They seem to be overwhelmingly important.

The tiniest things can become overwhelmingly important. So what you are growing into is in any situation that you encounter, not to be exclusively focused on the situation, but to have some focus, some awareness at a deeper level. And you might, as you know, when I say awareness, at that deeper level, you are not aware of anything.

On the outer level of your life, you are aware of whatever goes on. Usually in normal usage, when you use the word aware, you say aware of what? You can't use the word aware without saying aware of what?

You sometimes read in newspapers and so on, increasing awareness, but it's usually followed by about certain issues, increasing awareness about the environment, increasing awareness about what climate change, increasing awareness about what we need to do in education. And all this is wonderful. You're increasing awareness about all these things.

In all the various situations of your life, at any given moment, your awareness is aware of whatever goes on around you. Then that is not enough. But the awareness of what gone around you, you need to be aware of, at a deeper level, of the awareness itself.

You need to be aware that you are aware, right at this moment, for example, you're aware of my voice, you're aware of this room, you're aware of whatever sense perceptions you can now register in your consciousness. But at the same time, this wonderful thing is possible. That is, you can be aware of awareness.

In other words, you realize you are conscious that you are conscious. This is the one fact in your life that is beyond any doubt, because it is so obviously the case. Right now, you are conscious.

And even that may be a distortion that happens through language, because there is no real you apart from that consciousness. So if I express it verbally, and if I say, you are conscious, or if I say, I am conscious, but this language operates like that, but even that is a slight distortion, because that implies that I and conscious are two things. The essence of who I am, apart from consciousness, there is no me, there is no I.

It would be nothing. Consciousness is who I am. It would be more accurate to say, I am consciousness.

That is who you are. To realize you are consciousness is at the same time a realization of this vast realm of inner stillness, because that consciousness is the unconditioned consciousness. It is just vast spaciousness and great depths.

I am consciousness. After you say it, you can... How do you know that you are conscious or you are consciousness?

It's so obvious you cannot possibly doubt it. This is the one fact about your life that you cannot doubt, because all the rest may be a dream. There's no way of proving that us sitting in this room here now is a dream that you are having.

You can... There's no way of disproving that this is not a dream. This may be a bit...

And many philosophers have looked at ordinary human existence and described it as dream, dreamlike. In many ways, it is a kind of dream because what does a dream do? It appears and then suddenly it's gone.

And the situation too, it appears and then next week it'll be gone. And then you might wake up one morning and say, retreat, asylum. Was that a dream or did that happen?

So this may be a dream, but even if it is a dream, it still applies that you are conscious in that dream, right? Now, if you were not conscious, there would be no dream. Nobody could have a dream.

The dream could not appear. So it becomes irrelevant whether this is so-called reality or so-called dream. The actual reality is that you are conscious, whether it's a dream or reality.

Consciousness is still required even for a dream to exist. Then it needs to exist in the light of a consciousness. So you could well say, and this is getting closer to the truth, that everything that happens in the world, in your life or in the world at large, is the dream that the one consciousness is having, including yourself, including your person.

That vast consciousness is infinite. It can have dreams, dream that includes an infinite number of scenarios and entities and beings and life forms, all coming together in this web of interconnectedness and appearing as the vast dream that appears as the entire universe and what happens in it. Consciousness dreaming and consciousness dreams so that all these things in the dream, which are part of the one consciousness, seem to have an independent existence.

They don't realize that they are part of the dream of the one consciousness until they wake up. And they wake up in the dream. And in the dream, the one consciousness wakes up after a few million years of dreaming, or billion years.

The one consciousness wakes up in the middle of the dream and says, I know who I am now. I am consciousness. And then you look around and it's quite a nice dream.

It's quite interesting. So when you realize that you are consciousness, the universe realizes itself through you. After a few billion years of dreaming and creating this incredible multiplicity of life forms and the universe, which is dream-like, consciousness wakes up and becomes aware of itself.

You could say God becomes aware of itself in this dimension. Words can only give you an approximation. I cannot explain the universe in words.

I mean, it would be absurd to even try. So whatever I say is like, it's a bit like this, or it's a bit like that. That's not it.

The words could not express it. I mean, I've said it before. When you speak, it's just a few sounds produced by the vocal cords plus air pressure produced by the tongue.

So the rest is the five vowels, A, I, E, O, U, R, O, E, O. So you put these together, a little bit of air pressure and a few sounds produced by the vocal cords. And you are trying to explain the meaning of the universe.

But you can give a hint that's all an approximation. Or the same thing on paper, just a few symbols, scribbles, printed page on a computer screen. No, of course you cannot encapsulate the secret of the universe, but one can get a sense of what it is.

And then there is a deeper knowing that cannot really be expressed through language or words or any other symbol. And so the reason why I am pointing to it with words now is when you are ready to hear this and you are ready to experience, to realize that within yourself, this awakening of consciousness. And in that there is a deep, you kind of know what is at the heart of the universe.

But could you explain it? No, you can give a few hints. If you are poetically inclined, you might write a poem about it.

Or if you are musically inclined, you might write a musical piece that points to it. It's not it, it points to it. All these things can only point to it.

Or you're an artist or you may dance and point to it through your dance. But when you become aware of yourself as consciousness, you realize what lies at the heart of the universe. Because the heart, meaning the innermost dimension of yourself, the core, the heart, is when you find that within yourself, that is the heart of the universe, because you are a microcosm of the entire universe.

So to explore the secret of the universe, you will not find it, although I love science fiction and I love spaceships, but you won't find the secret of the universe by traveling out there to explore the last, what is it? The space, the last frontier, yes. Of course, the last frontier is the inner space.

So, but the outer space is very interesting, but you won't find the heart of the universe out there. So that doesn't mean never go there. That's one dimension of human existence is the outward dimension.

But the secret of the universe, you can only find that within yourself. What is the essence

behind it all? The essence behind it all is that one thing that is not mentioned when you read books about cosmology, you read books by famous scientists trying to figure out the mystery of the universe and the galaxies and the black holes.

And you can read these books and often you find the greatest mystery of the universe, they never mentioned once. You can have these books and read the entire book without the word consciousness ever appearing once in the whole entire book that's about figuring out the secret of the universe. And the greatest mystery of the universe, far greater than any number of galaxies, the greatest mystery of the universe and the greatest miracle is that the universe is conscious.

And to ignore that and try to figure out what the secret of the universe is, you ignore the most obvious thing that's right, not just in front of your nose, but behind your nose. And you try to figure out what the great mystery is of the universe. Well, you forget the most important factor, which is yourself, your innermost being, because you're looking so much out there, trying to figure it all out.

And you overlook the fact that the secret you already carry it within you, the secret of the universe. And because it's easy to overlook the consciousness that you are, because sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions are so noisy and clamor for your attention. You need to think about this thing.

Oh, look at me. Look at this. It's so important, this situation.

Look what he just did. Are you going to do something about it? Yes, I need to do something about it.

And then another thought and emotion comes in. So everything demands your attention all the time. Thoughts demand your attention.

Other people demand your attention. The incoming email demands your attention. Another Facebook posting demands your attention.

A text message is coming in demanding your attention. And then there's a traffic to cope with. And then you're running late already.

So it's so easy to overlook because the gravitational pull, both of the external world and the world of thought and emotion is so enormous that it's not surprising that people lose themselves totally in the world of form. And then they start believing that the solution to everything must be found in the world of form. They just need to look harder.

And then you get that restlessness of a person who is never at ease anywhere because they're trying to figure something out. And they're really trying to figure out how to get to a place of where they can be at peace. And so they need to get this done first.

Let me first do this. And then the next thing, you have to deal with this now. And the only thing I have to achieve this and I'll be okay, I think.

Never get there because then something else demands your attention. And when you deal with this, you just sort it on one situation. Another one collapses behind you, describing ordinary existence.

And not surprising that people overlook this very gentle but incredibly powerful thing that is at the core of who you are because your attention gets continuously, you get hypnotized by everything. You get hypnotized by every situation, by every thought that comes in, by every emotion. And so you're always identified with this and that and reactive to this or that.

And of course, then you get, people get very exhausted with life. They get tired of life. Can't take it anymore.

So this overlooking is important because when you realize that there is something vital that you tend to, until recently, you have always overlooked. And what is that? You overlook the very thing that makes it possible for the world that you experience to exist.

The very thing or no thing that makes it possible for you to think. To experience anything. And that's consciousness.

So the moment you become aware of consciousness and that has always been there, but you always overlooked it. Another way of putting it is become aware of your own presence. You become aware of yourself, not as a historical person, a person with a history, but become aware of yourself at a deeper level.

Become aware of yourself as a conscious presence. And that had always been there, but it was continuously overlooked because other things were seen to be so important. And even for humans who are awakening into this now, they still experience being hypnotized and completely distracted easily by other things.

Even if you're already awakening, you can still find that a relatively unimportant situation can draw you in completely. And again, you forgot who you are because that's what it is. When you get upset about anything, you have forgotten who you are, essentially.

And all you think, you're this little me. So self-forgetfulness is the main unconsciousness. So this is why an early teacher in the 20th century, Gurdjieff used the expression self-remembering.

So he was trying to teach people to be aware of themselves. He didn't use, I don't think he used the word presence, but he said self-remembering is the most important thing. And this can be misunderstood as meaning, I need to think about myself, my life, here,

me, here.

That's not it. It's realizing yourself as the presence. What Gurdjieff did, sometimes he had various devices with his students.

He would sometimes, when his students were talking, I could try that at lunch hour, when you're having lunch, he would come into the room and he would suddenly shout, stop. So everybody had to freeze, whatever they were doing. And the idea behind it was to become conscious of yourself, to step out of the stream of mind and emotions and suddenly become conscious of your presence.

Whether it works or not, I don't know. But that's what he did. He was so eccentric and unusual, he even tried to get his students drunk and find out if he can remain conscious.

So we don't need to go there. Self-remembering, that's an expression he used. I would say, be aware of your own presence and practice that first.

The easiest practice is when you're in nature or perceiving anything around nature. So you can be aware of the perceiving presence and letting go of labeling, unless you need the label to explain something to somebody. But otherwise you walk around, you watch the ocean, you watch the trees, the sand here, the sky, even if it's gray, let go of the thought, oh no, not another June gloom day.

Let go of the thought and just be the presence behind your sense perceptions. That's the easiest practice. It's also, you can practice with an animal, a dog or a cat also to just be present.

This is why people love being with dogs and cats because they don't stimulate your complicating thinking mind. They are simple creatures. They are conscious, but pre-thought.

They don't have an opinion about you. So the dog doesn't have judgments. The dog simply loves you unconditionally because the mind hasn't started up yet, the conceptual mind.

So the dog doesn't think, what a jerk. He just responds to the present moment. And you can come back after three hours or two hours and the dog greets you as if you had been away for two or three years because he's so deeply connected with the present moment, with life.

So humans are much more difficult to stay present with, you might have noticed. The natural world is easier to be present with. And as you perceive, and you might even do things in the natural world.

You may do gardening. You may be walking. You may whatever.

And you can still be there as a presence more than a person. There may be a bit of a person too because occasionally you have thoughts. You may not be able to remain, nor do you need to in thoughtless awareness for long stretches of time.

But predominantly be there the presence and then the person occasionally will come in. Of course, the thought might say, I wonder what's for dinner tonight. Or it might say, oh, that's a nice tree.

I wonder what that's called. But it's not really that important right now what that's called. And then you let go of that thought.

And so there's more experiencing without thought than through thought. The two fundamental ways of experiencing the world through thought and conceptual knowledge and without thought and conceptual knowledge, which is awareness or presence. Most humans don't know that.

Why don't they teach at school that there are two fundamental ways of experiencing things? One is through thought and so on. And one is through simple looking, listening, hearing, being present with.

Shouldn't that be the most, even more important than count from one to a hundred or to be able to write or read? The most fundamental thing, the possibility that there is another consciousness in you that's possible rather than just the thinking. But at school, all they stimulate, unless it's an alternative school, all they stimulate is the conceptual mind only.

And the continuous doing through the conceptual mind, never being, doing, doing, thinking, thinking, adding more and more concepts. And the best students are the ones who are the quickest thinkers, not those who are the most profound thinkers, because to be a profound thinker means there are moments of stillness. You are not a profound thinker if you're always thinking.

If you're always thinking, you're a superficial thinker. Profound thinking doesn't really exist. All it means is you have spaces of no thought.

And if you have spaces of no thought, then your thinking becomes more inspired. It is inspired by the depths of awareness. And so, but at school, these children who are slower because they go deeper, they're encouraged to let go of that and think more, accumulate knowledge.

Albert Einstein, until up to the age of five, his parents and his nannies suspected that he was mentally retarded because he was so slow. Because he was naturally, there were spaces in him. So he wasn't, he wouldn't give fast answers because you could ask a simple question and he would just, hmm.

And in the meantime, all the other children all went, I know, I know. But the question probably had, there was a much more profound answer possible, but he needed to go within for that. All this is not recognized in our, it hasn't been for a long time, but we are getting back.

We're now rediscovering something or not. Whether the people in the past had glimpses of knowledge of the importance of stillness and awareness. For example, the importance that ancient tribal societies give to the elders, because the elders represent the deeper dimension of life.

And again, there was a reason why the elders were important. The elders represented the dimension of stillness. What function do elders have in our society?

None. They are just put away into homes and then they sit there and watch television, unfortunately. So there's another huge area where new structures need to be created.

If some of you may want to do that, I would encourage you. Old age is a wonderful opportunity for surrender, deepening, becoming aware of yourself as presence, but it's better not to wait until you're old because it may be too late because many old people don't realize who they are just because they get old. They get just more entrenched in their patterns.

So instead of becoming like this and the ageless consciousness shining through, they become cranky, continuous. They've been in resistance even before they got old, but now that they're old, they're even more in resistance. I don't want that.

That's a pity. Missed the opportunity of old age. Become aware of yourself as presence.

You're reaching the heart of the universe. Whether or not you can say anything about it doesn't matter. Consciousness, the greatest mystery of the universe, and you embody it.

What could be a greater mystery than the fact that the universe is conscious? There are some books where philosophers, modern philosophers try to explain consciousness. I tried to read some of them, but they are so tedious that I had to give up.

If you're interested in going a little bit further in conceptualizing consciousness and understanding as much as is possible, and it's not much is possible to understand conceptually what consciousness is, but Ken Wilber has some good insights into consciousness and he would be one of the few contemporary philosophers that have something useful to say about consciousness. But even there, you cannot really explain what it is except it can only be realized non-conceptually. I may occasionally, we'll just go on for a little while, see what it feels like.

And I may occasionally say a few words while we meditate, which may be helpful to some of you, just to wake you up in case you drift. The challenge in meditation is that

you are drifting below thought. Of course, when you drift far enough below thought, you fall asleep.

So if you hear any snoring, it is a sign that somebody has drifted significantly below thought. But real meditation, of course, is being alert and awake, so alert and so awake that thoughts just don't come in anymore. You remember in the power of now, I used the analogy of the cat watching the mouse hole.

And the cat watching the mouse hole is extremely alert. And I once lived with three cats, so I know a lot about cats. I've observed them a lot.

And the cat watching a mouse hole is like this, very alert. Now, the cat, of course, is focused only on the mouse hole. But here in meditation, if you have a meditation object, if you cannot stop thinking without a meditation object, you may need to focus on something, a mantra or an inner image or whatever.

But the real meditation is choiceless awareness. So sometimes you need this first, and then when the mind has stopped, then you go like that. Then so you're not focused on any one thing in particular anymore.

It's just expansive awareness. You can even look around in that state. I can look around this room without a single thought in my head.

So can you, probably some of you. You look around this room, without a single thought in your head, and be aware simultaneously of your surroundings and your own presence as consciousness. Another way of putting it, you can be aware of the stillness underneath your sense perceptions.

That's consciousness. You can meditate with your eyes closed. Most people do it with their eyes closed.

You can also occasionally open your eyes and still remain in that state of presence. So that one important step for meditators is to realize they don't need to keep their eyes closed to be present. Because if you associate being present with your eyes closed, the moment you open your eyes, you're not present again.

So, but as initially, it can be helpful to have your eyes closed. If you cannot keep thoughts at bay simply by choosing not to think, as we sit here, you may need to put your attention on something. And I suggest, as I mentioned yesterday, feeling the aliveness in the inner body, or be aware of your breathing flowing in the air, flowing in and out of the body.

Or even simultaneously, be aware of the aliveness in your body and be aware of the fact that you're breathing. So yeah, there's just that awareness that can help you to be still, to be free of thinking. So when you hear the bell once, it's not the end of the meditation.

I just ring it to remind you to be present. If you're drifting off into thinking, put your attention back into the body. Now open your eyes and continue your meditation with your eyes open.

So just being present with your sense perceptions. I will talk just a little bit more, but with lots of spaces between the words, so that you can practice meditative listening, which means you're aware of the words that you're hearing, but you're also aware of the spaces between the words. And while you're aware of the spaces between the words, you may notice you're not thinking.

If you are thinking, you cannot be aware of the spaces between the words. And this is good practice to be aware simultaneously of form and formlessness of things and of space. And you may notice when you are aware of that space, you're really aware of yourself as the presence, because that presence is inner space.

And you may notice when you're aware of space, you're not waiting for the next thing to happen. You're not waiting for what I'm going to say next. No need, because you know that what I'm going to say next, whatever I'm going to say next, cannot add anything important to the realization of your presence.

And so intentionally, I'm not saying anything very interesting right now, because if it's too interesting, you will get drawn back into the words and into thought and into form. So it's good that this talk is boring, that leaves more room for the awareness of space. Music, when it has a spiritual dimension, also has spaces in it or an underlying spaciousness.

Some visual art also has spaciousness in it. And when you look at it, you may find there isn't much there. For example, certain Asian paintings, a little tree in a corner, a little distant mountain, a tiny human standing somewhere, and 85% of the painting is empty space.

It might be the sky or just empty space. And if you really look at it, you become aware that the essence of the painting is not what's there to be seen, but the essence is what's not there, space. And so looking at that can be a realization of your own spaciousness.

It's so liberating to realize the essence of yourself as stillness. Space. One little practice I would recommend, take five minutes or so.

You can practice here, of course, but at home, everybody has five minutes. Don't believe your mind when it tells you you don't have five minutes. And the practice is sit somewhere outside or indoors for five minutes and practice perception without interference of thinking, which means you just look around wherever you are.

You may look at occasionally your gaze rests upon one thing for a little while, and then you look on, then you take in the totality of whatever surrounds you. And as you do,

you're aware simultaneously of what you are seeing, but without calling it anything. And you're aware of the stillness that is your essence.

That's the background to the visual sense perceptions. And so this is a blank canvas. And whatever you see is the painting on the canvas that appears and disappears, appears and disappears.

But the canvas is the spacious stillness. It's a beautiful way of perceiving the world. And another practice, particularly good when you're outside, but also indoors, sit for five minutes again and be very alert.

Pay attention to whatever you are hearing, alert listening. The slightest sounds. No sound is better or worse than another.

Just every sound is received. Beautiful bird song, the motorbikes driving past. But you are again the canvas for the sound this time.

And it's all just register. And you have no preference. Any sound is fine.

And you're aware of yourself as the presence, the listening presence, the alertness that makes the hearing possible. And again, as much as possible, no mental labeling. The subtlest sounds are the best that way because they require your greatest alertness, some distant sound.

So if you sit in a very still place, in nature, perhaps, see how far you can hear. Do you remember the story in the new earth, the Zen master walking with a disciple and they sit down, have something to eat. And then the disciple says, can you explain how to enter Zen?

Which means, can you explain how to enter the state of consciousness? That is Zen. And the master says, can you hear that distant mountain stream?

And the sound must have been really distant. The disciple at first can't hear and then he becomes more alert. And of course, as he becomes more alert, he stops thinking because you cannot be really alert and think.

Thinking implies a certain degree of non-alertness. So the disciple listened. Can you?

Yeah, I can hear now. And the master says, enter Zen from there. In other words, that's a portal into presence.

And that's how you can use sense perceptions in your presence practice. So do this today, tomorrow, wherever you are, sit somewhere. If you're comfortable standing, I wouldn't lie because lying while you do this is often an invitation to go below thought.

So sitting and sitting without leaning back is better. There's a natural alertness that

comes as you sit upright. And then you go first to visual practice.

You may do that. Some other time you do five minutes auditory presence practice. So it's good.

I think I will talk like this all the time from now on.

[Speaker 7] (5:09:39 - 5:09:54)

Our program continues with session five, examining the ways we see observation, perspective, and labels with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (5:10:07 - 6:21:13)

I noticed there's a huge amount of written questions. I've been spending a long time going through them and getting terribly frustrated, stressed out. So in this session, I'll address some of the written questions.

I selected as much as possible those that occurred frequently, similar questions asked by different people. Later tonight, we will probably have spontaneous questions that spontaneously arise in your mind in that moment. I've put a couple of lighthearted ones on top.

Is it a good sign if I have no more questions for you? That would have been a good sign. And here somebody has a big problem with surrender.

There's an ugly telephone pole outside my living room window. I try to accept it, but it ruins my view. Sometimes I feel compassion towards it because it is working hard at doing its job and no one loves it.

How can I accept the telephone pole? Am I trying too hard? Should I just accept my non-acceptance?

Well, that's an interesting question. This may not be a profound example of resistance causing some suffering, but even here, the basic mechanism behind non-acceptance is still the same. And going beyond non-acceptance, I can see that the questioner is attempting to go beyond non-acceptance in one particular way.

First by formulating certain thoughts that are designed to make it easier to accept what's there. So in this case, the thought is, it's doing its job, so I should be compassionate towards it. Or it's working hard and nobody loves it, so I should love it.

That's a kind of rationalization that is a little bit better than complete non-acceptance. You can do it, people try to do it with their own lives. They say, I really should be, I shouldn't be unhappy because look at all these people who are worse off than me, and so I should really be happy.

And so then you try to think of all the people worse off than you, hoping that that will generate the feeling of happiness, which of course means you depend on other people's unhappiness in order to feel more happy about yourself. So that is not the real, or it's lovely to love the pole, but it's not the real surrender. The real surrender is when you look out of your window and you have no thought about what it is that you see there.

In the absence of any kind of judgment in your mind, the pole is just as perfect as the trees behind it, because the pole was a tree once. It still is in a way, it's the same substance, but you don't need to think that. What I'm saying is it's all there as it is.

If you can bring the simple aware perception to it, there's no longer anything to surrender to. And then you have got this feeling that everything is where it's supposed to be, it's fine. You just look out, you do the same, let's say it might've happened to you, you wake up in the morning, here the past few days it's been gloomy, and you open the curtains and then the mind might've commented on the weather and said something like, is this dreary, how can people live here in this?

Is it like this every day of the year? Why is it so always, we are in the summer, why is it so, it's just terrible. Instead, you could just look out of the window and just be, ah, a space of openness, what is, no judgment.

This is one thing I would recommend. I call that the window meditation, not just in the morning. Anytime you look out of the window anywhere, consciously look out of a window, make it into a moment of meditation because you will be seeing something on the other side of the window.

You see something out there and you can spend a minute looking out of any window, wherever you are and giving it your fullest attention. So that becomes the focus of your attention, whatever you see out there without, and you look at it as we've been practicing, if necessary, feel the inner body and then look out of the window. I started a while ago taking photos with my iPhone of different windows that I find when we travel and so on, looking out of different windows in different places in the world.

And they're little meditations. Every window is a little meditation. And if you've been on one or two of my previous retreats, when I had a spiritual entertainment evening, showing little video clips, I showed one video clip of a little two minute video that Oprah produced, well, not herself, but her people.

They were handing out empty frames to people about this size, like picture frames, but they were empty, there was nothing inside, picture frames. And they were asking people in the street somewhere to take this picture frame and hold it anywhere to any place. It doesn't have to be remarkable and in fact, it's better if it's not remarkable and give attention to whatever you see on the other side of the frame and appreciate and acknowledge, not through thinking, but through giving it attention, what it is there.

And people found that quite amazing. They went around with this picture frame. One person was just looking at a wall.

Another person was looking at an insignificant flower that's grown. Or you can look at a glass of water. You can look at the sky through it.

That was a wonderful practice of giving your fullest attention to something that's usually overlooked, all the ordinary things. In the normal mind identified state of consciousness, you overlook almost everything. The entire, whatever the present moment is continuously habitually overlooked because you have something more important to think about.

Not realizing that your entire life unfolds in the space of this moment. But, oh no, there's something I need to think about. Maybe at some point when I've sorted out my stuff, I can do that when I'm retired.

So the overlooking, you overlook that, but you overlook it because the main thing that's overlooked is of course the consciousness, the unconditioned consciousness, the stillness underneath the thinking that's there in everyone, the spaciousness. We talked about that. You get hypnotized into believing that everything out there is of absolute importance and every thought that arises in your mind you need to give it attention.

Come this way. Okay, where are you taking me? Oh, you'll see.

I'm going to take you to a very nice place, but first you need to worry about how you get there. And so looking and just be with it. A person who has not yet arrived at thinking can do that in some way, but a person who has transcended thinking like you can do it more profoundly.

There's an added dimension of depth. A one-year-old child will also look at the world like that. A one-year-old child in whom the conceptualization has not started yet, looks at the world in that open, totally open way.

The world not yet burdened by concepts. And this is, I would say, Jesus was talking about it, that if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven, you must become like little children. Okay, so in order to know what he's talking about, you need to look at a little child and how a little child observes the world.

But of course, yes, there is a similarity there, except that the child is at a pre-verbal and pre-conceptual stage. And you, as you become present, are at a post-conceptual stage where the entire conceptual dimension can still be used perfectly, but you are no longer confined to it. To be confined to just the conceptual dimension in your mind is the most dreadful prison because then you're confined also to a conceptual sense of self.

Your entire sense of who you are is derived from certain things that your mind is telling

you about who or what you are. Just concepts, stories, whatever you want to call it, thoughts, little bundles of thoughts that reoccur again and again. And they say, that's me, with reactive patterns associated with them.

Dreadful prison. Of course, concepts are wonderful if you use them. If they use you, and if you identify completely with them, then that's a dreadful state.

Then it would be better to regress, be a little child or a tree or a dog and wag your tail and be joyful again. But we are not here to regress. We're here to transcend.

Are there specific suggestions for cerebral helpers, physicians, therapists, et cetera, to help us become present and stop thinking, to listen better just prior to encounter, taking deep breaths prior to entering patient room, perhaps? So what suggestions for cerebral helpers? I mentioned that a little bit a couple of days ago.

People who use a lot of knowledge in their work with others. So if you are a certain type of spiritual healer, then you would most probably not apply your conceptual mind in the healing situation. But if you are a physician or whatever, then you have to apply your knowledge to the healing situation acquired over many years.

And so just to remind you of what I said a couple of days ago or three days ago, you need to be able to still use whatever modality you use, your knowledge, apply it, but see if you can also have the application of your knowledge interspersed with little spaces of aware presence. Sometimes that happens when you listen to whatever the patient is telling you. Sometimes it may happen when you look at the patient.

Sometimes it may happen when you place attention on a particular symptom. And you might notice before you come to a conclusion about whatever the condition of this patient may be, there is a moment when you are looking at the patient or at the presenting symptoms. And there's a moment perhaps of three seconds when there's no thinking yet.

Anybody to look at something first, in the first moment of looking at something, you're not yet thinking. Most people miss that completely. They don't realize that for the first two or three seconds when you're looking at a patient, let's call him a patient, client, whatever, you're looking.

And before the mind begins to the application of its knowledge to the situation, there is a space of just aware looking. And that many people do that without knowing it at all. It's a natural thing to do.

There's a moment of space. But if you are aware of that moment of space of looking, then it becomes a little deeper and longer it goes. And that is, you become aware of what already you're doing naturally without knowing it.

When you become aware of it, it actually deepens and it might get a little bit longer. Instead of looking for three seconds, you might look for five seconds before the mind comes in and that's, okay, this is what this person needs. Now I need to do this, this, this.

And this is interesting. Whenever you encounter a new situation and not just not, let's take it beyond the therapeutic situation. Whenever you encounter a new person comes into your field of vision, you're walking, you're going around a corner, a new vista opens up.

Anything, somebody is knocking at your door, you open the door and then you look who is standing there. And for the first two seconds, there's no thinking. You need to take it in first.

You need to take in the sense perception. So naturally in daily life, people have the tiniest moments when they're not thinking. And it's always something new arises in your field of consciousness.

And in the first few moments or in the first moment, there's not yet an interpretation of it. There's only an absorbing it. If you find you're particularly peaceful or at ease, then you find there are longer periods when you're out in nature, then you spend longer periods, perhaps five seconds looking at a tree before your mind says anything.

You go, oh, this is so nice. Be aware in your daily life of the first, whenever something new comes into your field of vision, there will be a moment when you're just aware of it. And usually the mind tries to come in as quickly as possible because it does not like, the egoic mind does not like to be in a state of not knowing what's going on.

It needs to adopt some kind of position towards what you're seeing, what you're perceiving. So as quickly as possible, it wants to come in with some kind of judgment or interpretation. I need to know.

If you become aware of these naturally arising moments of presence that are very, very brief, then you can, they will be there consciously. And if they're there consciously, they naturally become a little bit longer and there's a deeper awareness. So catch those things in your daily life.

They will be there. Every time something new arises, you need to look first. And there's that space before the mind steps in.

And if you are a deep person, so to speak, then you're, that space that precedes thinking is longer. That's all, then you become a deeper human being. If that space is incredibly short, almost non-existent in some people immediately, then they are superficial.

They might have two PhDs, but they are superficial. There's no depth to them, which may, well, there is a depth, but it is as if it wasn't there because it's totally covered up.

So a deep human being has longer spaces of no thinking before that person replies or that person, now don't, this is a natural thing.

If you can make it into a practice, yes, too, as long as the ego doesn't get in there and say, I want to appear. I want to be a deep person. So I'm going to take a long time in answering any questions from now on.

So in the therapeutic situation, also be aware of this. So bring in the spaces and observe the spaces that occur naturally in that situation. They will be brief.

In addition to the spaces that occur naturally in the situation, bring in these spaces, for example, when listening to the patient, just listen. When you may also occasionally be aware of your breathing as you did. So any way you can, bring in little spaces, give fullest attention to whatever you're doing.

You're preparing something. Perhaps you're going to administer something to the patient. If you're a physician, you're preparing something.

In that moment, there's another opportunity for absolute presence. So it's an art to have your knowledge not completely obliterating these little moments of spaciousness in you. It's an art that needs to be practiced.

Otherwise the effect that it has on you after many years of being completely, completely absorbed only in your knowledge when you work with people, then you live in a world complete conceptualization and you will no longer be able to see the human being. You will see a patient. You will not relate to a human being anymore.

You will relate to a patient or you will only relate to a symptom in a patient. And some doctors, unfortunately have gone that way because nobody has taught them that another way is possible. So perhaps many of you have experienced being with certain doctors who actually don't see you as a human.

They see you as a patient. Or they're only interested in the symptom. Some doctors even hardly look at you.

Of course, there's pressure of work. They have to have a few minutes to see you. So it's all those physicians and other cerebral, as the questioner says, practitioners.

Of course, obviously you are here because you have already gone beyond that to some extent. So you're not totally burdened by the acquired knowledge so that it obliterates everything else. Interspersed.

So what applies to the therapeutic situation applies to anybody's daily life too. You must have your daily life interspersed with presence. Otherwise, it's just the human mind dragging you along.

I feel a deep sense of peace and awareness arising within me. I see myself in others and feel an abundance of unconditional love. How can I best communicate love and loving kindness to people, Irina?

Your mind is saying that in addition to the arising of loving kindness, which comes through presence, you need to do something else, but you don't. The arising of loving kindness is enough and then it will flow into the way in which you relate to others. It flows into your speech.

It flows into the way you look at them. It emanates from you. You don't need to figure out mentally what you're going to do with it because it knows.

It goes where it wants to go. It is the essence of who you are. So the question is really unnecessary because you're already there.

Now allow it to manifest through you. And it does in every encounter. It cannot not manifest.

So that is beautiful. Many questions have come from people asking about feeling drained after working with people for a long time. For example, I work in a healing capacity and often find helping professionals come to us asking for help when they find their energy to be drained by those they support.

Health professionals, social workers, even hairdressers who spend much of their time listening to the problems of others can feel exhausted at the end of each day. Any advice from you would be welcome. This is Sally asking and quite a few other people.

The energy loss mostly happens if you engage too much with the mind stream of those people. Now this is for people who listen and to people talk like counselors and so on. If you engage with the mind stream that comes through the words and follow it, that tends to take energy out of you.

So the art is to remain, while you listen, to remain aware of your own presence so that you don't allow the mind to link in with your mind and then pull you along. And this is why you may remember I mentioned when I used to work with individuals, I would sometimes, a smile would come to my lips when I was listening to them, their problems. And the smile comes because the presence is so peaceful and beautiful.

And it knows that that person also, their essence is also that presence. So you listen to the words, but instead of being drawn into that mind stream, you allow it to go through you. So to continuous to have your awareness in your inner space while you are engaged in listening so that I would almost say at least more than 50%, if one could even quantify it, more than 50% of your attention, 70% of your attention needs to be in the energy field of presence, your stillness.

And then you listen from there. Then it's not draining to listen. But if you listen with, then it draws your attention.

If you link into the other person's mental stream, your mental stream unites with the other person's mental stream and then you get dragged along. So that almost looks as if you were a little detached. And I don't know if detachment is the right word.

Perhaps it is. But detachment limits it because you're not only detached, you're on a deeper level. You are more at one with that person than you could ever be on the mental level.

So on the mental level, there is some detachment, but on a deeper level, there is a sense of, there's the unifying field of awareness that is there between you of presence. So there's no separation. Yes, detachment on one level, but on another level, there's the realization of oneness beyond the conceptualized identity.

It's again, it's a practice. It's an art. Another related question.

Do you have a comment about labeling of people, diagnostic evaluation and so on for psychiatrists and others? Counselors, psychiatrists, of course, that's what they've been trained to do. You find certain labels for certain conditions.

And again, finding a balance between, yes, you may still want to apply your modality through which you look. It's a kind of map or a lens through which you look at that person. And then you figure out according to your training, what's wrong with that person and what you come up with, of course, is a certain concepts that you apply.

And say, this person suffers from narcissistic personality disorder because he won't stop talking about himself, has no interest in anybody else and gets angry when anybody disagrees with him and is desperate for attention and acknowledgement. Okay, that's narcissistic personality disorder. Okay, so that label may have a certain validity, but if you think that that is who that human being is, if you equate the labels that you apply to the person with who that person is, which is the danger when you have lots of labels at your disposition, which you can apply to people, you then mistake the label for who that person is and you're treating a narcissistic personality disorder person and you can no longer sense that although this person may display all those symptoms, there is a being underneath it. There is a consciousness underneath it that is one with the consciousness that you are. So the danger is that you mistake the labels for the identity of that person.

As long as you know that it's only a label and it's a temporary label because anybody can suddenly change, sometimes through suffering, through a miracle, or they can change gradually. Anybody can suddenly change and suddenly there's somebody else there. There are many people in prisons when they went into prison where one person and some of them experience a transformation.

Most of them unfortunately don't, but some of them experience a transformation of consciousness while they are in there. So the dreadful person who did dreadful things disappears. There have been cases of the most people have committed the most dreadful atrocities and then through intense suffering, perhaps on death row over years, all their, whatever blocked their essential being got burned up, burned out of them.

The totally dysfunctional ego, the absurdly dysfunctional ego, the violent ego, the murderous ego, got burned out of them. And there's, what's left is just the presence. So you cannot, there's never, whatever the conditioning of that person is, that's never who that human being truly is.

Or you could say in the way I use the word, the human is the conditioned level. The being is the unconditioned. The human is temporal and the being is timeless.

So it's vital, not just in the therapeutic situation, not to mistake labels for who, not to equate mental labels that you give to people, not to equate that with who they are. And also not to equate what they did with who they are, because what they did was the result of their conditioning, their unconsciousness. So that is as important for professionals who have labels that they apply.

And it's important in general for everybody not to believe in the labels that the mind comes up with, not for yourself either. Who am I, me and my life, conceptual identity. You don't want to live through a conceptual identity for the rest of your life.

It's so limiting. Now, I don't know how this got here, but it's here. My Christian friend thinks I am going to hell because I have not accepted Jesus as my personal savior.

I disagree. I think he is stuck in an ego-based belief system. Who is right?

Well, I'm sure your friend thinks he is right. And I'm sure you think you are right. And now you want me to confirm that you are right.

There are certain levels of evolution and there are also certain levels of spirituality. And what works on one level for certain people may not work on another level for others. So there's another question here somewhere about whether one needs to have a master, a spiritual master, not to worship, but as a means of attaining salvation, it's a wonderfully asked, do we need a spiritual master or guru?

Because there are certain people who will tell you that you absolutely need to surrender to a spiritual master or guru to attain salvation. And again, if that is your path, then you will find one. And you may surrender to him until you grow out of that stage, but it works while you do it.

It brings you to some degree of surrender. If the master is a real master, he will send you away at some point and say, find yourself. I've been teaching you for long enough.

Goodbye. Or if you are lucky, he dies and then you're alone suddenly. Jesus or Jesus Christ can be seen also on many levels.

At a certain level of consciousness, you regard Jesus as your personal savior. There are other levels of consciousness where you may regard Jesus as a representation of Christ consciousness. And Christians can go that way.

You can go very deeply and still be a Christian. You can transcend the lower level belief systems that are associated with not only with Christianity, with any religion. They are the lower level belief systems that corresponds to certain degree levels of consciousness in humans.

And you can go to a deeper, deeper level of realization and can still have Jesus or Christ as the representation of transcendent consciousness. And then that may still work for you. So there are teachings that are quite profound.

For example, A Course in Miracles that use Christian terminology, but take it to a deeper level. Other teachings, Joel Goldsmith, for anybody who has read, he was a spiritual teacher in the earlier first half of the 20th century. He also took Christianity to a deeper level.

There were medieval mystics like Meister Eckhart, perhaps the most profound, who took Christianity, even medieval Christianity, which was extremely absurdly limited and totally intolerant and just incredibly unconscious. And he took that and he revealed, he interpreted in such a way that it suddenly had enormous depth. And miraculously, he didn't get killed or burned, but he just, just before he died, apparently the Pope, whoever the Pope was at the time, condemned his teachings.

And then very conveniently, Meister Eckhart died. So you can have, if you go to a Buddhist country, you see many practices that are, that correspond to a certain level of consciousness where the Buddha is basically a god and you carry a little thing around here for your personal protection. And even the thieves and bandits, they carry the Buddha here for protection.

They may go around killing people, but they want the Buddha for protection. And if you go into a Buddhist monastery in a Buddhist country, you may, after a little while, you may be a little disappointed because at first, when you're a Westerner, you think every Buddhist monk looks so enlightened because they are. But if you actually go there, you see most of them are not enlightened at all.

Some of them have gone into a monastery because they were escaping from the police and others because it's a living, they look after you and your family wanted you to go in. So it might have sent you there as a young child. And so you're there, it's okay.

But here and there, there are some monks who have gone very deep. So they represent

a different level of consciousness. On the whole, Buddhism is the closest, perhaps, to the spiritual truths than other religions have gone further out into mythology or Buddhism has too.

But the original teaching is still fairly intact. If you look, you have to sometimes dig deep to get to it, but it's there. So these teachings correspond to different levels of consciousness.

So let your friend be saved and allow him to believe that you are not saved and that you are going to hell. And perhaps one day you can talk to him about, not about presence, but about Christ consciousness. You might even select certain passages in the New Testament where I believe St. Paul, for example, says somewhere, I must diminish and Christ in me must grow. This is a free, I don't know the literal translation anymore. I must shrink and Christ in me must grow. Really, that means Christ, the consciousness, the mind of Christ, as it's called sometimes by St. Paul, the mind of Christ, as opposed to the little me. So there are certain hints there of a more transcendent truth shining through here and there. You have to look for it. It takes a while to find it.

Little pearls here and there. So if you want to have a talk with your friend at some point when he feels a bit relaxed, or you can give him a book by Joel Goldsmith, for example, and see what he says about that. One thing about the archetype of suffering that is embodied in the figure of Jesus, because the person who is suffering on the cross is an archetype of human suffering.

A very strange image. And over the centuries, it has, I believe, to some extent helped many people to enter the state of surrender when suffering arose for them, because they felt that they relived or reflected the suffering of Jesus on the cross. And by feeling that they went through the same suffering as Jesus on the cross, they were able to surrender to their suffering.

And if you surrender, then something else arises, inner peace arises, no matter how your mind interprets it. It doesn't really matter when presence arises in a human being, the mind may interpret it in certain ways. For example, a Hindu person might say something about Krishna, or the interpretation of the mind comes after something happens that is beyond the mind, and then the mind comes in.

So over the centuries, the identifying with the suffering, Jesus has helped, I believe, many people to surrender to their own suffering. Because in a way, Jesus stands for every human being, and the cross stands for, is the amazing thing. I've mentioned it before, but I'll mention it again.

The cross is, amazingly, it's a torture instrument and a symbol for the divine in the Christian religion. It's a torture instrument and a symbol for the divine. Isn't that weird?

How can a torture instrument symbolize God or the divine? But there is a deeper meaning behind that. Suffering, which is symbolized by the cross, can become the doorway into the divine.

And then the very thing, the worst thing in your life that created the suffering, when you surrender, becomes the doorway into presence. For example, we had a questioner the other day who had developed bowel cancer, and then through that, which normally would be, it was suffering, and then suddenly there was surrender to it. And then that is the cross.

The condition that she suffered from is the cross and the cross as a torture instrument. And when surrender happens, the reversal occurs, the torture instrument becomes a symbol. The cross is now suddenly a symbol for the divine because it becomes a doorway.

And that's an amazing thing. Now, this is when mythology works to some extent because it embodies a truth that for a long, long time, people would not have been able to understand intellectually as we do. When I explain it to you, you can understand this truth intellectually.

But for a long time, people couldn't understand this truth intellectually. They just intuitively grasped what was behind it. Now, I'm talking about it when in those cases when the mythology actually worked because it was a living teaching.

In many other cases, it got so misinterpreted that it did the complete opposite from liberating people. So in many, many cases, for religions to survive, to survive the arising of a new consciousness, they would have to undergo a fundamental transformation and if they can't, then they will eventually disappear. But it is possible for religions to survive, but it would be a very significant change.

One thing that happens, the religion and the mythology have to separate so that because the age of mythology, we have outlived, we cannot believe in these stories anymore, nor do we need to. Buddhism has mythologies too. There are weird stories of the birth of the Buddha.

When the Buddha came out of his mother's womb, he's supposed to have said, I have come here for the salvation of the world. And that's very misleading because the Buddha was a normal human being who transcended eventually the limitations of the human condition. A few people asked a similar question.

This is not directly related to helping people, but it seems to be important, an important question for many people. For example, here, you and Krishnamurti both talk about the importance of choiceless awareness, directly confronting what is without judgment. You also talk about the primacy of presence as the way to transcend thought, the improper

use of which is the cause of our suffering.

Another teaching respected by many celebrates thought and desire as being responsible for our evolution and the expansion of the universe. While both teachings have much in common, this appears to be an important point of departure that I cannot reconcile. Can you help clarify?

Hi. Is that the same Jeff who asked the previous question? Anyway, it doesn't matter.

It's only one consciousness, so. So there seems to be basically two teachings, he says, and many people have asked similar question. One is accept what is choiceless awareness, presence.

The other one is using thought to create, to manifest, to transform. Are they separate? Can they be reconciled?

As I mentioned the other day, the two represent the two movements of the universe. One is into creation, multiplicity, increasing complexity of life forms. It experienced itself as that.

It loves to create. That's for sure because if you look around, even on this planet alone, how many life forms there are, all perceiving the universe in a different way or saying the universe, the one consciousness, perceiving itself through all these different forms in different ways. You could call it a dream.

You could call it reality. It doesn't matter. These are just words.

And then the universe also wants to know its own source. And that's the return movement is first as the outboard movement. And then there's the return moon.

This might correspond to the big bang, what scientists call, which the universe came out of nothing. Nobody knows what that is. It started from nothing.

And suddenly it expanded and went into creativity. And my forms began to multiply over billions of years. And then the story goes, some scientists say, and even in ancient Hindu mythology and others, there's a story that eventually it will come together again and return to the one.

In that case, that would be like the inbreath and the outbreath of God. The entire universe, God breathes out and then it all returns back to the source for some reason that we could not even fathom. And even if we even just start thinking about it, what might the reason be, you would never find it through the conceptual mind.

But that seems to correspond to what we do because we have a heart that also goes, and we also breathe in and breathe out. And we also wake up in the morning and do all our activities. And at nighttime, we go, and then we go, now everything is reflected on

every level.

You are a microcosm of the entire universe. So if you observe yourself, if you observe how the heart works, how the breathing operates, how the sleep and wakefulness, dreamless sleep, dream state, the so-called wakeful state, which is not that wakeful for most people. But here we have similar, there may be, there certainly is a similar pattern everywhere.

So the universe has both movements, the creative and the return to stillness, the return to source. Every human has that incredible irresistible impulse every night to return to source. If you can't resist it, it's called tiredness.

And if you try to keep your eyes open, you can for a while, but you would go insane if you didn't sleep. We regard it as normal that people just drop unconscious every 15 hours or whatever. Everybody drops unconscious.

Isn't that weird? But it's so normal that nobody questions it. You will also notice when you get really tired, how irresistible the pull is towards sleep.

What does it, when you, feeling tired is a, there's a sweetness to sleep. The more tired you get, the more you feel, I need to get there. Something the pull is so irresistible that people give up their life to sleep.

People who have been lost in the wilderness, out in the cold, in the snow, nowhere, can't walk anymore. And they know if I fall asleep, I'm never going to wake up again. And yet at some point, they do it because it feels so good.

They have to go there. Doesn't matter if I don't wake up again. I want to go back to the source.

So every human goes back to oneness, but doesn't know it unknowingly. And then comes back out. So here we have, if you really look at yourself, that will tell you many secrets about the universe.

I'm talking about this because this is how the two movements are reconciled. The universe needs both. It needs the creativity.

It needs also the stillness. And for humans, it's not enough to go unconsciously to the source. It's our destiny because it's the destiny of the universe to consciously unite with source, source consciousness.

And that's why we are here. So your life needs to be a balance, a dance between creating and not getting lost in your creations, which means not getting lost in the mind, being able to use the mind to create, but for conscious creation, because for a long, long time, the universe, the humans created their lives, but unconsciously. And they lost

themselves in their creation.

They lost themselves in the mind. Whenever you get stressed, you are lost in your creation. You are lost in your activity.

So allowing the unconditioned consciousness, which is the universe to create through you, rather than being a little ego that says, I need to be happy. I need this and this and this and this in my life. And then, okay, I'm going to create this.

And when you get it, you realize it doesn't make you happy. The Course in Miracles says, how do I know when something is ego motivated, something has been ego motivated? Well, it's easy to know.

It says, when you achieve it, it doesn't satisfy you. Maybe for a little while, but not for long, very briefly. So no egoic achievement satisfies you.

What is the motivation for creation if you're already accepting of the present moment? If you feel completely at one with the is-ness of the present moment? There are two reasons why you take action here.

One may be as a response to a situation that requires action. You may be stranded somewhere without food. So you need to walk somewhere to get food and shelter.

In the meantime, you can internally accept where you are. You are right here. And then you see what this present moment requires.

It requires you to take a step and then another step and another step until the situation is resolved. So certain situations, somebody may need help. You can sit at ease contemplating nature and suddenly there's a human being who says, oh, help me.

Do you sit there and say, no, I'm too at ease in the present moment. So a situation, you respond to whatever the situation, the present moment requires you to do. You respond from within.

That's a natural thing. So certain situations obviously need a response. If you live in a place that is noisy and cold or unpleasant in some way, yes, you have to surrender while you're here.

If you don't want to suffer, you have to accept this moment as it is. It's cold, it's noisy. The bugs come in at night.

I was in the lucky position when I was a teenager. We lived in, I lived with my dad in Spain for a few years and he had gone to Spain to drop out and lead an alternative life and then he ran out of money. And then when I was there, we had so little money, we had not even a fridge.

I mean, almost everybody had a fridge but there in the hot summer in Spain, no fridge, no radio, no television. Of course, I couldn't even think of it. So basically just the minimum and I wasn't dreadfully unhappy because of that.

To some extent, I accepted it because I was still young enough, children find it perhaps easier to accept situations that they go into. But normally, if I lived in a place like that now, I have no fridge, I have only basic things to live with, things get, I can't buy anything in advance. I have to go shopping every day because everything goes off immediately.

Oh, yes, and if you leave anything on the kitchen counter, immediately armies of ants come in and eat it. Okay, I'd rather move than be here. You can accept that this is where I am right now, it can still be fine, but you would start looking or I'd like to live somewhere else.

You see, this situation can have a preference and why not have a, everybody has a preference. Some Buddhists might talk to you about or some masters say, I have no preference whatsoever, but they live in an ashram, so they'd rather be in an ashram than be on Wall Street and work there, so there must be some preference. And so everybody has some, there's nothing wrong with having a preference.

I'd rather have a comfortable place than an uncomfortable place. But if I cannot have a comfortable place, I will be perfectly okay with an uncomfortable place. If it's not possible, fine, that's what's wrong.

I can, it's fine. So this is one thing is dealing with, responding to situation and having preferences and then taking action. Another one is bringing about something entirely new into this world.

And that comes when you are able to become still enough, so that you know what the universe or the one consciousness wants you to do, if it wants you to do something. It may take a while before you know that. I lived for years doing relatively little except doing occasional counseling sessions, sometimes only two a week.

And then the years passed and I was just continuously just in presence on my bicycle, chopping wood, carrying water. And the years passed and I spent hours in thoughtless awareness in London, sitting on the Hampstead Heath. Three hours later, I go home having a little salad and then having a counseling session at five, could live on one person a day, one counseling session a day.

And I wondered, my mind wondered sometimes, there must be something else that I'm supposed to do. And there was even slight moments of, what am I doing here? But there was nothing else to do there, be present, just be, go back to Hampstead Heath, sit there again.

But there were long periods also of incredibly blissful states that people noticed, even people who are not tuned into spirituality, particularly say, I can feel something. What is that? There were great states, emanation of peace, but I wasn't doing anything.

It was just that emanation, sometimes waiters and waitresses, occasionally went to little restaurants. They felt something, but still nothing. The universe still wasn't telling me what I was supposed to do.

And I believe the decisive change came, perhaps I should have thought of that earlier. There was a, I had moved out of London to Somerset and lived in Glastonbury, the spiritual Mecca that attracts all kinds of weird people, including myself. And just outside, there was a village just a few miles out of Glastonbury.

I would sometimes go there and there was an ancient, like the English villages, they have their ancient church, sometimes a thousand years old, a few houses around it. There was an oak tree. I would go to an ancient oak tree in the middle of the field, magnificent.

I had a wonderful relationship with that tree. But that church that was always empty, I went into that church and one day I went in and suddenly I had this impulse to say, I want acceleration now. I want, I knew there was something for me to do, but I clearly demanded acceleration of my life purpose.

And then I went home again and for maybe three months, two or three months, nothing happened. I'd forgotten about it already. And then one day it came.

It came when I woke up and I suddenly, I knew as a thought and a deeper knowing, I have to move to the West Coast of North America. Why? I don't know.

It wasn't just one day it stayed. The next day it was still there. The next week it was still there.

The week is still there. And then finally I had to leave. Couldn't not leave.

If I had not left, I would have died. So that was the first step in writing The Power of Now because I needed to be in the energy field of the West Coast for some reason to write it. And that's how the book started when a few weeks after arriving on the West Coast, it started.

And then it accelerated from there. Slowly it went, just the book took three years with on and off because I had to go back to England several times. The visa had expired and I came back.

Canadian West Coast, US West Coast, anywhere on the West Coast I could write. Back in England, I couldn't write for some reason. So I'm not saying you can't write in England.

I couldn't write. There are lots of wonderful writers in England. And then the acceleration, it came more and more after The Power of Now came out.

And then it'd be so much that I almost wanted to put the brake on. But it was, the power just grew and grew. But it came because for years I went so deep within that eventually the outer movement into creation, the outward creation reflected the depths of years of going within into just into stillness and deep into stillness.

So the outward creation reflected the inward movement. It was just, it was as powerful out there as it was in the inward movement. So you too will find that the more you align yourself with the essence, the stillness within, the unconditioned consciousness, the more the power will, there might be a time gap, but hopefully not as many years as in my case.

There may be a time gap, that the power that is within you, that you sense when you become aware of yourself as the consciousness, then flows through you. And that is what creates through you, not the little ego anymore. So you don't create because you think, when I achieve this or that, I'm going to be happy and fulfilled.

No, the happiness and the, well, happiness, something deeper than happiness, the fulfillment is already here now. The true creation cannot come out of a neediness. That's egoic creation.

That doesn't make you happy. It'll make you unhappy. Whatever you create, eventually either will not satisfy you or make you unhappy.

That comes out of a neediness. The egoic creation believes, I need to attract something to me. I need to attract this.

I need to attract that into my life. The non-egoic creation, the consciousness uses you as an instrument, uses this form as an instrument, comes out of the inner fullness. So the creation comes from within to without.

It creates the outward from within, rather than needing to attract something from the outside. Although in a language, you might sometimes express it that way. You might say, I attracted this or that person into my life.

But really it's the other way around. You can only create out of this fullness that you sense when you're in touch with presence. And only for those people who are meant to create, as I said before, there are certain others who will not be drawn towards that.

In them, consciousness will express itself in different ways that will not be creating something new out there. It will just be bringing this new consciousness into this world wherever they are and contributing to the new consciousness simply by embodying it. So it is not the case that the two seemingly incompatible camps, those who say the

important thing is to use thought to create and the others say, no, just be with what is.

The two actually need to be together. You need to be deeply aligned with the present moment before you can be a real creator. And you are not the creator.

The consciousness creates through you. If you are not fully aligned with the present moment, you are not fully aligned with the unconditioned consciousness. And then it can only come through in little trickles through you, but it's not a real flow.

[Speaker 7] (6:21:34 - 6:21:40)

Our program continues with session six, questions and answers with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (6:21:56 - 6:23:25)

I assume that most questions have dissolved in the stillness or found an answer out of the stillness. But just in case, there are one or two questions left. Perhaps we can listen to them and then see if an answer comes or not.

I'd also like to allow a little bit of time for an evening meditation after the questions. Be here now. Don't be mentally at the airport or driving home as you're sitting here.

So if there are any questions, feel free to put up your hand. And Barbara is going to be the omnipotent person selecting.

[Speaker 4] (6:23:29 - 6:24:24)

Your interaction with the ER physician that you had was quite powerful. And I felt a lot of energy in the room from that. I'm a physician also.

I'm a gynecologic cancer specialist. So I take care of patients from surgery, chemotherapy, hospice, end of life. And there's that same pressure on all aspects, not to spend the time and take care of them maybe the way that we would like to if we could.

So I'm doing this to help take care of me, which is great. But my question is related to all the other physicians that I work with. Who are suffering and I can see it in them.

And it's the more that I learn your teachings, the more I see the suffering in them. And I don't know what to do to help them.

[Speaker 1] (6:24:27 - 6:25:03)

Right. I think I saw your question. I had selected it to answer it.

If it was a written question, that might've been yours. That was good. So I'm glad you were chosen.

Have you had made any attempt to somehow convey to your colleagues maybe unsuccessful attempts so far?

[Speaker 4] (6:25:03 - 6:25:28)

To some degree. Just over the last couple of years, there's been real research showing burnout. And that's a definable thing.

And so we can use the term burnout, which doesn't seem to offend people to talk about it. And then I've introduced some mindfulness strategies because that's another term that doesn't seem to offend people.

[Speaker 1] (6:25:28 - 6:26:58)

I was just going to say that mindfulness has become almost acceptable. So if you use that word, that might be more acceptable than presence. It's the same thing, of course, but I don't use mindfulness because it implies that your mind is full, but that's okay.

So what about creating a support group for people who work in similar capacities, both people that you know personally and perhaps other people? Because nowadays, the strange thing is the wonderful thing about the technology that we have nowadays, not only it amplifies human madness, because any person can put out any thought and immediately, no matter how crazy it is, there'll be a few thousand people in the world who will respond to it and agree with you and participate in the craziness. But on the other hand, there's also, you can reach so many people through the media, those things, internet and so on.

But you would start on a small scale. What about a mindfulness group for physicians? You could call it that.

You can become the leader of that because...

[Speaker 4] (6:27:05 - 6:27:06)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (6:27:12 - 6:32:46)

Sometimes life asks you to do something. It may ask you to do something before you may think you're ready for it, but life knows better. And the strange thing is, you as a person would never really feel ready for this because it's hard to do.

But if you can become still and get out of the way, because becoming still means getting out of the way, if you can become still, you'll be amazed. And I'm not only talking to you, but many others. You'll be amazed how empowered suddenly the words that you speak become or the energy that flows through you and how inspired you become and what it

might lead to.

Because things need to change if the system, not only in medicine, but in many other areas, is ripe for either collapse or complete change. It cannot go on the way it's going because it can only become more disintegrating. And no matter where you look, it's a question of it'll either collapse or change.

And if it collapses, that's fine too. Now I'm talking about social systems and so on in general. Eventually something more conscious will arise or something more conscious may arise and transform the old before it collapses completely.

So what is it that you could, the ideas will come to you. You can just offer to them, for example, have a meditation, show them what mindfulness is, see if they like it and then go on from there and then transmit it, go on the internet, contact others, it may suddenly spread. There are people in mainstream who are doing this.

I got invited by a scientist to Stanford University a couple of years ago. I gave a talk there and you would have thought they would not be interested in what I have to say, but that I was wrong. They were very interested.

Now, not everybody came, but many people did come. And this is a scientist who actually he is a, I believe he's a neurosurgeon and he teaches at Stanford. He is extremely interested in mindfulness and spreading the message.

He's connected also to Buddhism and Buddhist teachings. So maybe he can also, you can talk to him and see what feedback you get from him. It's good if you can, I don't know if you've met other physicians here, if you can build up a support network of people who can then support others.

There are infinite possibilities, but anybody who is here would have to consider themselves as a leader in this, because you may not yet be fully present all the time and fully enlightened on a daily basis, but you know much more than most. I mean, and I don't mean conceptual knowledge. There's a knowing in you of that dimension of consciousness that is still new, still many.

And I believe that the world desperately needs you and you start in your world. You can reach the most appropriate place for you to reach others is within your sphere of influence. And that is your work.

So what exactly, what form that will take, only you can know. It will be helpful to connect with others, get feedback, talk about it. What can we do?

And then the person at Stanford, I believe is Professor James Doty, Doty. Unfortunately, I don't know how to spell it, D-O-T-Y, something like that. I can let you know.

So see yourself as a spearheading this movement of awakening because they need you. So not only your patients need you, your colleagues need you. And then the work that you do, which is wonderful, will be enhanced immeasurably by bringing a different state of consciousness to it.

And once that happens, then the entire system may begin to undergo a change. Change always begins within. How do you feel about this?

[Speaker 4] (6:32:51 - 6:33:28)

I'm a little speechless, but it's a crisis. And I think that it really is a crisis. And so I know you're speaking not just to me, but to others that are here.

And I think that we need to do this in all aspects of medicine. So if I can help. Thank you.

So thank you for giving me the push. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (6:33:29 - 6:33:46)

I know that Dr. Patel and his wife is here. He's been coming for many years. And have you met him?

I believe he has in his cancer clinic in Bakersfield. He introduces also counseling and mindfulness. Maybe you can connect with him.

[Speaker 4] (6:33:47 - 6:33:48)

Great.

[Speaker 7] (6:33:49 - 6:33:49)

Good.

[Speaker 1] (6:33:50 - 6:33:51)

Thank you.

[Speaker 7] (6:33:54 - 6:33:54)

Hello.

[Speaker 2] (6:33:58 - 6:36:12)

I'm very nervous to be asking my question because I feel like I have a lot of confusion. But I know that that's a good place to be asking my question from. I've been a financial planner for 33 years and went back to school six years ago to become an energy healer.

And I love it because I don't have to know. As a financial planner, I had to know. You

know, I had to give answers.

But with energy healing, I get to hang out in the unknown. And it's really fun for me. And I'm not attached to the outcome for my clients.

I know something's happening, but I don't know what is happening always. And I love that. So the question that I have for you has to do with something you said this afternoon that I got very confused about.

Any resistance closes the channel. And I know that I have a powerful effect on anyone that I come in contact with. I know I vibrate at a very high consciousness level.

And that I'm here to contribute on that level. And I'm very good at manifesting. But the place that I'm confused about is that I don't know how to figure out those internal resistances.

I'm not clear on that. I'm clear on all the external resistances. Like, do you want to do this or that?

No, yes. But I get confused about being in the source and knowing when I'm in the source versus when I'm maybe in my egoic creation because I'm so good at manifesting.

[Speaker 1] (6:36:16 - 6:37:04)

So what is in your daily life, your state of consciousness? Do you undergo great fluctuations in your state of consciousness? Do you still experience the pain body occasionally coming up?

What are your thought patterns throughout the day? Do you have episodes of negative thinking that you identify with? To what extent are you able to be aware of your thoughts?

Do you get taken over by streams of thinking on a daily basis? What is your state of consciousness in your daily life?

[Speaker 2] (6:37:04 - 6:38:06)

I'm very good at witnessing myself. I'm fairly good at being able to make a choice in the moment, a different choice in the moment when I'm witnessing myself. I've done a lot of work on my pain body.

I think where I have a challenge is in something along the lines of clarity as to there's like a fear or something that runs maybe in me along the lines of knowing that I'm good at manifesting and not wanting to go in a direction of manifesting when I'm not sure that that's the direction. So there's that confusion and the piece that you said this afternoon, any resistance closes the channel. I just keep sitting with that going, where's my

resistance that's closing the channel?

[Speaker 1] (6:38:08 - 6:38:33)

Well, only you can know that resistance arises as negative thinking that you're identified with and then an emotional contraction that reflects the negative thinking. Maybe there isn't very much resistance and that's why you get confused. You're looking for something that isn't there anymore.

Maybe you think there must be some resistance. Where is it? I'm confused now.

So.

[Speaker 2] (6:38:37 - 6:38:46)

It could be because I have spent my life on a very deep healing journey and been very open to always looking at those places.

[Speaker 1] (6:38:46 - 6:40:21)

Yes. So trust yourself and not only not the personal self, but the deeper self and what emanates from that. And it seems to me that you're fine.

You don't need to be concerned about resistance right now. There's already enough presence in you to dissolve it when it comes. Nobody needs to be demanded that they should be totally free of resistance or that they should be totally conscious on a continuous basis.

That is not necessary. Just detecting when you're not conscious is fine. Every time you detect a dysfunctional state that you have slipped into in a relationship or at work or wherever you may be, then the moment you know it, the moment you lost it, so to speak, that's an expression, I lost it, which usually means in common usage, I got very angry.

But here I'm using it in a wider sense when you say, I lost it means I lost presence. I lost consciousness. I got totally identified with the stream of thinking.

I got totally identified with the pain body. I lost it in the way we use it here or I use it means I lost presence completely. So you may sometimes still lose it, but I believe you're fine.

I don't think there's that much resistance. Your mind is perhaps looking for a problem where there isn't one.

[Speaker 2] (6:40:22 - 6:40:23)

You're good.

[Speaker 1] (6:40:26 - 6:41:08)

You're good. And that, by the way, is not uncommon because the mind always looks for a problem somewhere. It's amazing.

You could take a person to heaven, person who is not, no, you are okay. You'll be fine in heaven. But if you take a normal person to heaven, normal meaning unconscious, he would get very unhappy because, well, why is the problem?

He will find something wrong. Peace would be very threatening. They're not ready for that.

You are ready for heaven, it seems. So embrace it.

[Speaker 2] (6:41:09 - 6:41:10)

Okay. Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (6:41:13 - 6:41:57)

Thank you, Eckhart, for waking us all up. My question concerns the cultivation of virtue. I hear many traditions speak about cultivating loving-kindness, cultivating compassion.

And in our previous session, I heard you say that loving-kindness comes naturally out of presence. So can we cultivate virtues like you practice, you practice and you become it?

[Speaker 1] (6:42:01 - 6:59:20)

Thanks. That term tends to be used a lot in Buddhist teachings, the term cultivate, cultivating virtues. And so in Buddhism, there's a list of nice things that you, I only know the essential Buddhism.

I can't remember the long lists that you get in Buddhism of virtues and so on. I know the basic thing, which undoubtedly is what the Buddha taught is the origin of suffering and the way beyond suffering. That's the Buddha.

I think all the longer lists were compiled at a later stage by monks who wanted to make things more understandable and accessible to other monks, but they were not fully present when they did these long lists, but that's okay. So ultimately you're, of course it is better that somebody should at least attempt to cultivate the various virtues. The primary one in Christianity would be, of course, love your neighbor as yourself.

That's the primary. And really it all boils down to that in Buddhism, metta, loving kindness towards others is important. But ultimately to cultivate this, it's a wonderful intention and it's better than not trying to cultivate it, but ultimately you won't really succeed unless there's a shift in consciousness in you.

That is primary. Once there is that shift in consciousness and this is what our gathering is all about, it's virtually impossible to sustain the virtues for very long from the old state of consciousness because the old state of consciousness is dominated by ego. And if you want to cultivate the virtues, it's very often a desire of the ego to improve one's self image, not only for others, but for oneself too, because one wants to feel virtuous.

And so the ego feels better if it can convert its sometimes negative self image into a good one. And so the ego, it's like, okay, I'm doing this. I'm virtuous now.

But in Christianity, this for hundreds, thousands, 2,000 years, Christians have tried to live, well, not all, many haven't even tried, but to love your neighbor as yourself. Not that many succeeded because I don't believe that Jesus actually said, love your neighbor as yourself. I believe that they took, they were, that was taken out of context.

He said, the kingdom of heaven, which I translated, as you may remember, as the dimension of formlessness or the dimension of spaciousness is within you. And there's only one thing that matters. There's only one thing that of primary importance.

There may be many other things that are important, but there's only one thing that is of primary importance. And that is to find within you that dimension of consciousness and then live from that dimension of consciousness. And if you live from that dimension of consciousness, then naturally you will love your neighbor as yourself because you recognize your neighbor as essentially one with who you are.

And then you will also love God as yourself because you will then recognize essentially that God is the source of your very being. That's what he said. But perhaps people who wrote it down, they got to the bottom of the page where it said about the kingdom of heaven.

And if you enter the kingdom of heaven, if that's the dimension of consciousness, turn over the page, then you love your neighbor as yourself. And then at some point, the two pages got separated. And so all the virtues arise naturally out of that state of connectedness with being, which is presence, love, benevolence, goodwill towards other human beings, which is all aspects of love and whatever else, whatever other virtues, really it all comes down to no longer feeling that acute sense of separation between yourself and other human beings and between yourself and the source of who you are, the source of all life.

So God being the source of all life, the unmanifested source of all life, not when I use the word God, I'm not speaking of an authority figure, a controlling authority figure, but the source of all life. So your question was good. I had selected your question.

I saw it on a piece of paper and it had been selected for an answer too, but I'm glad you asked it. What is the difference between facing life without resistance and standing up

for yourself, asserting yourself? Many times I am asked of something and I acquiesce.

The third or fourth time this happens, I feel a lot of resistance and annoyance and I don't want to do it, but I still grim and bear it because I think this is my karma or my lot in life and I'm not to resist what is and go against the present. Please help. A slight understanding of the meaning of non-resistance, which is internal non-resistance.

What you do externally may very well be to refuse to do something or to say no. But even when you say no to something or somebody, you say it without any inner resistance, without making the other person wrong, without feeling the other person should not have asked that question, without feeling that you're offended by being asked to do something that you don't want to do, all the unnecessary baggage that involuntary mind activity creates. Without all that baggage, there's just a clear, no, I'd rather not do that.

And you're still in inner non-resistance. So inner non-resistance does not always mean that you go with everything, you go along with everything that somebody wants you to do. You say, oh yeah, okay, I'll do that.

If you want to see a funny movie about that, it's called Yes Man with Jim Carrey. And that's about a man who is very negative. He loves saying no because he's a mortgage responsible for giving mortgages to people at a bank.

And he loves saying no, he always says no. And he's very negative, no, with life. One day, somebody takes him to a new age motivational speaker and the motivational speaker says, all you have to do is say yes to life, say yes to the present moment.

That sounds familiar. And at first he scoffs at it and says, oh, this is rubbish. But then he thinks, well, maybe there's something there.

And then he starts saying yes to everything in life, whatever happens, and he gets into the most absurd situations, right? And finally, at the end, he learns it's, I believe he learns it, I'm not sure what the end is, but I think I have a vague memory that he learns that there is another way. That it doesn't necessarily mean that you go along with everybody people ask you to do, although it did change his life when he went along.

It made his life so much more interesting, but nevertheless, it led to near disaster too. So the inner non-resistance, the non-resistance is an inner phenomenon because when you say yes to something that you don't really want to do, that's not non-resistance. You are actually in resistance while you do what this person wants you to do.

So when you go against, when you have a certain feeling that you don't want to do something, but to please somebody, you do it anyway, there's inner resistance. So whether or not there's inner resistance determined by your inner state, it's inner resistance. And it's a wonderful thing when you are able to say no to something without

feeling any negativity whatsoever inside you.

Just to clear, it's still a very loving no. Or as I call it somewhere, I believe I wrote that somewhere, it's a high quality no. Because the low quality, the high quality no has no negativity whatsoever, just no.

The low quality no is no, no. Leave me alone. And the low quality yes is, can you please do this one?

Yeah, okay, I'll do it. Or okay, okay, I'll do it. Here's a long one, it seems.

How did that get here? Okay, I'll give a very short answer to this, although I could give a one hour long answer to this. While I've read all of your books, listened to countless audios, videos, retreats, and even attended events with you, I'm just now experiencing a difference in my perception of the now.

I thought the now was a destination, a place to go to or better to try to stay in, a place of no problems, a kind of heaven on earth. Then I thought it was a specific point in time, the moment in time where things are happening. Then last night, I opened up your little book, Oneness With All Life, and I read on page 22, the present moment is confused with what happens, confused with content.

The space of now is confused with what happens in that space. The confusion of the present moment with content gives rise not only to the illusion of time, but also to the illusion of ego. End of quote.

Now, I don't even know how to ask this question about the now, but I sense that there's something deeper than I'm going to experience about this. As a helping professional who wants to understand this, can you please say more about the now and its reality and truthful place for the benefit of our own growth, our work, and of course, extending through us into the lives of our patients and clients? You would be a, the questioner would be a wonderful speech writer.

So the present moment is confused with what happens, confused with content. So what is the now? First of all, most people believe the now is what's going on right now.

That's the now. They say, okay, this is the now, this room, people here, I'm breathing or something is happening or nothing is happening. This is the now, whatever I'm perceiving now is the now or whatever is going on is the now.

And here I'm saying, what happens is not the now. Well, everything happens now. That's for sure.

Nothing can happen that is not now. I don't think even the greatest philosopher could argue with that. That nothing has ever happened that wasn't now.

Nothing will ever happen that's not now because for something to even being and now is the same. Nothing can be outside of the present moment. But what is, so here we go.

This is what's happening now. Everything happens in the now means that the now is deeper than what happens. The now is the space in which it happens because if the now people believe there are many moments in every hour, many moments in the day and millions of moments in your life and a moment could be anything from a few seconds.

I don't know moment is a very vague term, but there's one moment after another and in every moment something happens. That's how people, but that's not the case. There are not many moments.

That's only how it looks like. If you look more deeply, you realize there's only ever this moment. This is it now.

Many moments because you remember something or you project yourself into the future, which of course can only be now too. There's only one moment ever, which is this now moment. But what happens in this now changes continuously.

Right now it's this room. Later the now will be something else. What forms come into it changes.

So what is this deeper thing that does not change that is always now? And the strange thing is you will notice the now is actually consciousness, the unconditioned consciousness, which is timeless, which is the essence of who you are. So that is the inner space, the unconditioned consciousness.

And in that everything happens. So the realization came to me a little bit too late. I had already written the power of now and then two years later, I said in a talk, you are the now in essence.

So you can put that in the power of now, write it in. You are, in essence, you are the now because you are the consciousness, the conscious space in which everything happens. It comes, dissolves.

Let's see, you are timeless. So you can actually verify that in your own, your realization of, you can actually, the strange thing is, you can actually sense the now. You can't, not with your sense perceptions, but you can feel the essence of now as the essence of, as consciousness right now.

The stillness is perhaps the closest, the easiest way to convey it through words.

[Speaker 5] (6:59:23 - 6:59:36)

Thank you for spreading such a positive, shining light. It's a fun kind of question. I was wondering, is it possible to have a conscious conversation?

[Speaker 1] (6:59:39 - 6:59:46)

Yes, yes. Have you experimented with that?

[Speaker 5] (6:59:48 - 7:00:02)

Yes, I have. I came to the conclusion that maybe two people wouldn't actually be talking to each other in a conscious conversation. They would be sitting opposite each other in awareness.

[Speaker 1] (7:00:02 - 7:02:29)

Oh, well, that's even better. But a conscious conversation is basically a conversation where it's between two people. Each person is not identified with their viewpoint, their perspective, their mental position.

They put forward their perspective, their positions, their viewpoints without any sense of self in it because they don't need that because their sense of self is derived from the presence that they can sense throughout the conversation in the background of their being. And then they can play with concepts. They can play with opinions.

They can play with words. They can play with arguments even. My argument is this, and then the other person, well, and mine is that.

The famous saying, what is it? We agree to disagree or something like that. That sounds relatively conscious because if you're not identified with your positions, then that's fine.

We agree. That's okay. It's interesting.

Self-identification with mental positions is the unconsciousness because then you will be defending your mental positions, but you're really defending your sense of self. And this is why these conversations become easily and very quickly become very unpleasant. They are unconscious.

So in unconscious conversation and with very unconscious people, it can even happen. I mean, you can probably read about it in the papers all the time. They get so defensive and aggressive about their respective mental positions.

They start physically attacking each other. It even happens. Sometimes you can see it in certain parliaments in some places.

And suddenly all these members of parliament start attacking each other. Washington sometimes gets close, but it probably hasn't quite happened that way. It could happen there too, who knows?

So what is your experience with being engaged in conversation? Do you easily get into

that position where you start to defend your sense of self?

[Speaker 5] (7:02:30 - 7:02:59)

In my case, I've been experimenting with thoughtless awareness. Yes. And I've been present, appreciating and being aware of the essence of the individual in front of me.

Yes. Listening to their words, but just allowing that presence of acceptance. However, I've struggled with returning a conversation point in that state.

[Speaker 1] (7:02:59 - 7:03:40)

Yes. That's right. And that's where the real practice begins.

Yes. Because if you kind of withdraw from engagement, then it's relatively easy to sustain presence. But when you begin to actually interact verbally and thoughts, of course, thoughts become words, then the real practice begins.

And especially if you engage in a conversation with certain things that you feel strongly about. And ideally you choose somebody who has the opposite viewpoints, then you can really practice.

[Speaker 5] (7:03:44 - 7:03:48)

It's funny you should mention that because I'm an acupuncturist.

[Speaker 1] (7:03:48 - 7:03:49)

Sorry?

[Speaker 5] (7:03:49 - 7:04:31)

I'm an acupuncturist. Oh, yeah. And I've just started a position in a hospital in central Sydney.

And the way I operate with energy medicine is in an opposite position to Western medicine in many respects from a thought-based point of view. And so I'm meeting a lot of individuals who have got a very strong position and I'm trying my best to allow this concept into this new institution. So I should imagine I'll be facing a lot of challenges.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (7:04:31 - 7:06:19)

So you can, there's a lot of, you can be practicing conscious conversation, especially with physicians who say, I don't believe in all that. And I know that's all, it's a lot of rubbish, but you do what you do. But then that's, that could be an interesting conscious

conversation.

So very, it can be challenging, but the art is to remain present, even as you put forward your point of view, so that, and this is important, I've said it before, but I say it again, so that you don't identify with whatever thoughts you are expressing. Identify meaning that they constitute your sense of self. And that's unconscious.

That is self-identification with thinking. That's the essence of unconsciousness. And so in order to counteract that, because there is an enormous pull when you start arguing with somebody or they argue with you, you need to, there needs to be a high degree of alertness in you.

And that alertness is presence. And that alertness needs to be there. And then the words need to come out of that state of alertness.

And that gives you your sense of who you are. Your sense of self is in the presence. Then you can play with concepts and words.

Then you can put forward your viewpoints. And even if they are, your viewpoints are being challenged, you will not feel attacked in your sense of self. And so that's the, that is the essence of conscious conversation.

I wish you luck.

[Speaker 5] (7:06:21 - 7:06:22)

Thank you very much.

[Speaker 6] (7:06:28 - 7:08:33)

Namaste, Eckhart. Thank you. Thank you.

I feel very much, as you describe, like the butterfly coming out of the cocoon in the awakening process. Still finding times of complete identification with the body-mind. Thinking that I'm a caterpillar or a person.

My ultimate truth is complete disidentification from the ego permanently. Like what you have. Or maybe better said, like what you are.

I'm not nervous. I'm observing nervousness. I've had the experience, even yesterday morning in your meditation, of no mind.

Zero. Nothing left but the self only. However, this cannot be it because this experience is phenomenal.

and can be observed. And on a deeper level, even the observing of this experience is observable. It seems that there are so many beings like myself in this awakening

process, yet very, very few beings like yourself awakened.

So I guess my question for you, what is the one thing, if any, that prevents a true spiritual seeker of the truth from complete utter divulgence into just complete self permanently?

[Speaker 1] (7:08:36 - 7:09:46)

You would make it easier on yourself if the focus of your attention is on the present moment at any given time and ask yourself whether you are awake at this moment, rather than projecting some future state where you might be, quote, unquote, permanently awakened. Because by having that mind form, pursuing that mind form, you would condemn yourself to the eternal pursuit of the mind form of permanently awake. Maybe one more, and then we will have our evening meditation.

Not that we haven't been meditating already.

[Speaker 3] (7:09:50 - 7:11:39)

My name's Jenny. I'm a physician assistant, and I practice in Michigan in the Midwest, in an area that's still very conservative. I'm excited to say I'm involved on two wellness committees, and I have dreams of bringing mindfulness to not just other providers, but to our patients.

And in the 12 years that I've been practicing, I've done lots of different things, worked in surgery, critical care, gastroenterology, and as I've been listening to you, it seems like the imbalance is truly this codependency that is encouraged by modern day healthcare. Not just patients dissociating from their role in wellness, but the pressure of providers to assume that responsibility. And what I heard from you, and please tell me if I'm on the right track, is that as we, whether we're providers or patients, enter into the present moment, we can trust the now.

We can trust our connection to source and what's manifesting in our experience. And as long as we have that connection, that there's no need to fear what is being said, that the proper energy transference will happen, and that time as we know it dissolves. And so, we as persons who feel called to be healers do the greatest service by teaching through example, by being present, and leading others back to the truth of their wholeness.

[Speaker 1] (7:11:39 - 7:11:40)

Yeah.

[Speaker 3] (7:11:40 - 7:11:41)

Right?

[Speaker 1] (7:11:41 - 7:12:51)

Thank you. Well, that's all. I think we needed to, everybody needed to listen to you.

It's one, there's no answer because there's no question, and the truth, you've been speaking the truth. So, it's wonderful. Now, let's have our lovely evening meditation.

I'll use the bell to mark the beginning and the end of our meditation. So, yeah, stillness is all that's needed now. I probably won't say anything, but you never know.

[Speaker 7] (7:26:14 - 7:26:24)

So, our program continues with session seven, contemplating the impermanence of all things with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (7:26:37 - 7:32:03)

Ideally, we would spend our last session in complete silence, but I'll speak anyway. As long as you're not waiting for the next thing that I'm going to say, the next thing you're going to do, which is the old state of consciousness, which is almost continuously waiting, preparing for the next thing, never fully here. But if you're fully here, you'll notice that even while you're moving, as you, of course, you're going to do soon, one can actually move and be at rest at the same time.

You can rest in the stillness within and move externally. And that's another way of looking at connectedness with being while you do. That's the art of living.

So one way of practicing it is when you're actually physically moving from A to B, still have that connectedness with being and have that still place. And so it feels almost as if the world is moving around you, the scenery is moving, and you are never moving inside. It's a bit like if you were watching a, maybe at some point as a movie technology develops, we'll have movies where you can experience being totally immersed in the action.

So you're sitting in, this is a science fiction idea, you're sitting in a movie theater and then everything, it looks totally real and you might even interact with the characters. And so when you rest within, it's a little bit like that, how the world, what it does to me, feels that you are actually never going anywhere. You remain continuously in the one, no place, but the world continuously shifts around you as you move.

And so you're resting in the stillness. And then of course there's noise around you and all kinds of things. The scenery changes, right now it's this room.

Maybe in a couple of hours, it'll be the windscreen of the car. And you're resting in the same place still. And then it might be an airport, people running around.

And you yourself may be running around. You don't, you can, perhaps you have to run to the gate and you can still feel resting. There's still that place that's unmoved.

The stillness, the timeless you, the spaciousness. And you can, this is where the, as I mentioned before, the Zen saying, hurry slowly comes from. What that means is, the slowly means this really, that's the unmovable within.

And basically also means you're always at home. No matter where you are, you have that feeling of being at home in yourself. And that is also fundamentally different from the normal state of consciousness where most people carry around or are burdened with a continuous sense of unease.

And then there's always a sense they've never really arrived. They're always trying to arrive somewhere. One could almost say, metaphorically speaking, they are trying to get home.

But even when they are actually at home where they live, they're not at ease. There's always something lacking. I'm not fully myself or whatever it is.

However, the mind might interpret it. You don't feel at home. Home, by the way, is a lovely word in the English language.

I believe it has a Germanic origin. But all these languages, of course, are Indo-European. They go back.

Many of them have certain roots in Sanskrit even. So home, what does that sound like? Home.

[Speaker 8] (7:32:10 - 7:32:12)

Home. Home.

[Speaker 1] (7:32:25 - 8:27:46)

And then the world is not experienced as stressful anymore, even when it moves fast or might even require you to move fast sometimes. But there's always another way of putting it is the center of the wheel, the absolute center. The wheel is spinning, but you, your conscious, the focus, partly of your consciousness, attention, conscious attention, is in the center of the wheel.

That's the space within your stillness. And then there's the wheel. And that's the movie show of your life that spins sometimes slow, sometimes fast.

And then it slows down again, but it's always doing something. So this may also help you because a few of you or many might feel a little bit sorry that the retreat is coming to an end. Whenever something ends, it's a little death.

Even saying, I mentioned it somewhere in a book too, even saying goodbye to someone is a little death, a temporary, because one situation comes to an end. And this, as I mentioned, I believe in the new earth of power now, most languages to say goodbye, the word, the expression they use is see you again. Au revoir, auf Wiedersehen, arrivederci, see you again.

Later, alligator. But making sure, so just as an affirmation that, okay, this is not the last time because to cover up this feeling of sudden emptiness. Now, if you realize that this place within is what this entire retreat is about, being rooted in that at the center of the wheel or the unmoved, timeless, unconditioned stillness, consciousness, whatever pointer works best for you, then you realize you don't actually, that's the real retreat.

The real retreat is that place within. Everything else about the retreat, the externals, and that's fine. So the retreat actually never goes away because the retreat is, that is the retreat, being home within yourself in that place.

Then you are on permanent retreat, permanent retreat from the world and yet able to interact with the world and interact consciously, no longer in the dysfunctional way. And if your interactions are not perfect, that's fine. You also become comfortable with the imperfections of this world, the so-called imperfections, including the imperfections of your particular form identity, which may make mistakes, sometimes do something unconscious.

It's not impossible. And you become okay with that also, that in that place is okay with what is. You can interact.

What I just explained is the actual meaning of the expression it goes back to, who first used that expression? I don't know. Being in the world, but not off it.

It's an expression used in Christian terminology teachings, being the possibility of living in such a way that you are in the world, but not off it. It's a Christian expression term, but it could be anything. It could be Buddhist, could be anything.

Being in the world, but not off it, is exactly, this is the meaning of what I just described and what you can verify in yourself. When you rest in that inner stillness, you are obviously in the world. That's the movie show around you that changes all the time.

But not off it means your sense of self is not entangled in all these things that continuously arise and pass away. As the Buddha would have said, all phenomena continuously arise and pass away, arise and pass away all the time. And so you don't get entangled.

Entangled means having your sense of self entangled in all the things that continuously arise and pass away. But because if you have your sense of who you are, your sense of identity, your sense of self, entangled in the things that continuously arise and pass

away, that is, as the Buddha said, dukkha, suffering. Can also be translated as general unhappiness, misery, discontent, or unsatisfactoriness, or something not right here.

What is it? Why do you always feel that something isn't quite right? That's dukkha.

And that means you are not connected with the essence of who you are. So you got entangled. You seek your sense of self in those things that cannot give you a satisfying and true sense of self.

All those things that arise and pass away. So to look for yourself in this movie show that continuously changes the impermanence of all things is a form of suffering. So wanting to hang on to this, identify with this.

And the movie show includes, it's not just all the things that happen externally around you. So the movie show is also the thoughts that pass through your mind. That's also really, that's also part of the movie.

And they come and go. And what people get entangled with, even more than the so-called external world, ultimately it's all the inner world anyway, we'll put that aside. What you get entangled with is the much more so every thought that comes, you get entangled in that.

And look for your sense of self in that. You identify with the thoughts that come, your opinions, viewpoints, likes, dislikes. You believe every thought that comes that tells you what your life is.

All of my life, I have to think about my life. It hasn't worked out. Not the way I wanted it to work out.

Why did all this have to happen? And then I failed at this, I failed at that. Maybe I can still make it, maybe not.

I need to think harder about me and my life. There must be a solution to the problem of me. Maybe if I see several psychotherapists, psychiatrists, maybe eventually they can help me find a solution to the problem of me because I perceive myself as a problem, like a knot, K-N-O-T, like a knot that wants to be entangled but can't.

Well, how do I do that? And then the psychotherapist, psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, a counselor may help you and untie this knot of the unhappy me. But it takes a long time and never really managed to do it until you realize that the entire knot is a kind of illusory construct.

And on that level, you can't do much about it. But if you realize it consists of thought plus emotion that you had identified with, then suddenly it's not a problem anymore. And suddenly you become aware of who you are beyond that.

And then you let it be, as the song goes. And suddenly you are not a problem to yourself anymore because you're not looking for your sense of identity anymore on the level of thought or emotion. And then thought becomes less problematic.

Thought loses its capacity to make you unhappy because before you might've noticed, most of the time when you get unhappy, it's because of certain thoughts that arise in your head that you completely believe in, interpretations of situations, events, people, misinterpretations, very one-sided interpretation as every interpretation is, it's just a viewpoint. And those things create unhappiness. Most of the time, that's what makes you miserable.

If you become miserable, anxious, regretful, it's believing the thoughts that arise continuously, which are part of the movie show. So it's not just the movie show out here. It's also the movie show in your head.

And so if you get dragged along in it, then it's a very confusing way to live. You have no central sense of identity. And this is why so many people manifest in different situations.

They manifest different aspects of their conditioned mind, which are sometimes called sub-personalities, or whatever. And you might have noticed people, those people in whom there is little or no awareness, they can change from one moment to the next, from one day to the next, or one situation to the next. When they encounter certain situations, suddenly some other sub-personality comes up.

This is still considered, this is not schizophrenia or anything like that. That's all, that's still considered within the realm of what is normal. I was always amazed for the short periods in my life when I lived communally, how changeable people are.

And every morning I would sit at breakfast in a community where I lived in England for a little while. And I'm always wondering, who is going to come down the stairs from the bedroom? What aspect of their personalities?

One day, it's a great, wonderful day, isn't it? It's so great to be alive. And then the next day, leave me alone.

This is a dreadful place. I'm trying to get out of here. I don't know how can people live in this place.

It's so dreadful. And this is only, and other sub-personalities in humans are triggered by specific situations, sometimes involving money or somebody dies. And then who is going to get the heritage, the funds?

And then suddenly everybody comes totally. Or certain people can do it because one person may remind you of somebody that you once knew who wasn't pleasant. All these things that you get entangled in with your sense of self, and that does not happen

anymore, or if it does still happen occasionally to you, you fairly quickly wake up again and realize who you actually and essentially are.

You are not your thoughts or not your emotions and not whatever arises and happens around you. The still center, so to speak. It's a way of experiencing the world that frees you from the world internally without leading to a sense of separation.

When I say it frees you from a world, it sounds almost as if you felt a sense of separation now between yourself and the movie show. There is a detachment, yes. But also as you interact with everybody, there is more of a feeling of non-separation that we interact with because it's not your sense of self anymore that you're seeking to reinforce by interacting with other humans.

So you can allow them to be as they are. And the judgmental mind either subsides completely or you no longer believe in every judgment that comes into your head, every thought that arises. So that's a wonderful way that removes fear from your life because if you're entangled in the movie show of your life, it's fearful because nothing, you cannot really hang on to anything for too long.

And it cannot give you your sense of who you are. And it's fearful because you're ultimately the inability to trust life, which traditionally in, for example, in Christian terminology is called faith. Faith is the ability to have a basic trust in life.

It's not faith in something. In some languages, faith and believe are the same word, but faith basically is a belief as you believe that a certain story that you've been told is absolutely true and it once happened and it's absolutely true, okay? And if somebody else doesn't believe it, then he's going to hell.

Well, he's going to hell because he doesn't believe the story, okay? You don't believe my story, I'm going to kill you. That sounds funny, but it's still many people's reality.

It's still many people's state of consciousness. Faith is something deeper. It's nothing to do with any story.

Faith is a basic trust in life that can only come from this inner connectedness with that place of stillness within. That the absence of fear is trust. The inability to have this basic rootedness in being, rootedness in being.

If you don't have that, you will have fear, one form or another. You may not always be conscious of it, but you'll always be somewhere in the background and sometimes very much in the foreground. And of course, every anxiety that you have is, it's all fear and many other emotions that are not pleasant, anger and so on.

If you look deeply, you will usually find underneath the anger, there is a fear of something. There's a fear of losing, there's a fear of your sense of identity, the fear of

not enough and so on. So, and the state of disconnectedness from being automatically results in a fearful state.

And the fearful state is an inherent part of the egoic state of consciousness. You can't have ego without fear. And even the most seemingly confident ego that looks, look at me, and you'll find it's a big act.

They're good at acting out. Why are they acting to cover up the fear that's behind it? Some egos are obviously fearful.

The moment you meet them, you can see the fear in their eyes, which might express itself as distrust, suspicion. What are you going to do to them? What do you want from me?

So everybody they meet, there's never an openness towards another human being because the ego thinks I need to protect myself. And then you start, the mind starts working out, what are this person's motivations? What does he want from me?

So there can never be an open, there's always some assumption about what the other person is all about. Never an openness. It's a dreadful state to live in.

Millions still live in that state. It's normal. It's considered normal.

So faith, to use a traditional term, is a deep trust. Now you're not trusting anything specific in the universe. You don't need to say, I completely trust this person or I completely trust this situation.

If you do, you will probably be disappointed because every human being manifests sooner or later certain imperfections and certain areas of unconsciousness. So they will make mistakes. They might offend you without knowing it.

They may omit. They may be dishonest once or twice with you. They may tell you a lie for whatever reason.

He lied to me. Oh my God, he lied to me. So I'd never want to see him again.

Well, that's enough. So you never lie to anybody? Well, that's not the point.

And then the mind, the egoic mind reaches some absurd conclusions. For example, after somebody said something, did something unconscious towards you and then the egoic mind says, I'm never going to trust anybody again. And it formulates some kind of judgment concerning all human beings or the world or God.

God, don't talk to me about God. You know what he did to me? I'll tell you.

I'll tell you. It's good to recognize the normal human state of consciousness than to see

the amusing side to it. It's quite liberating.

So you don't trust. People sometimes ask me, how can I trust? I've told many times, I've tried to trust another person and always get disappointed.

Of course you do, because you can't trust, you don't trust a person. Or you can say, as Byron Katie said, I trust them to do whatever they do. I trust them that they'll do what comes naturally to them.

In other words, it doesn't matter. But you are, the trust is the place within you, the connectedness with being. That's where the trust arises.

And when the stillness, the space, and then you have a generalized trust in life, which includes all human beings and includes the fact that humans are not totally conscious and will manifest certain unconsciousness to you from time to time. And it makes no difference whatever to your trust because you don't need to behave, you don't need another human being to behave in a certain way to reinforce this idea that you can allow yourself to have trust. You'd simply recognize that all things around you are impermanent and that includes human beings.

They may change their opinion about you. They might say you are the greatest they've ever met. And a few months later, they hate you.

Egos do that. And people do that also to spiritual teachers or gurus and say, ah, and then something happens and they hate him. Or you fall in love.

You fall in love and this is the person that's going to liberate you from your sense of insufficiency and incompleteness. And this is the person that's going to make you happy now for the rest of your life. How wonderful that is.

And then you get disappointed. That wasn't supposed to happen. He was meant to make me happy.

And so the so-called love suddenly turns around into its opposite. So all that happened was initially the so-called love relationship covered up that feeling of distrust in life, that feeling of lack and insufficiency. And it was temporarily, it wasn't removed.

It was temporarily covered up. And then when the other person does not behave in the way that he or she was supposed to behave, the feeling reemerges and you feel it even more strongly than before. But the mind misinterprets it as meaning that he caused me to have that feeling or she caused me to have that feeling now, that terrible feeling.

But of course, the terrible feeling was there before. You just feel it more strongly now because the cover has been removed again. And this basic distrust and unease emerges and you feel it even more now after having been deceived, deceived yourself.

So human relationships change fundamentally once you do not look to other humans as a source of finding completion for yourself or somebody that you actually can place trust in. This is a very important point. I even remember having looked at two or three questions on the pieces of paper that I'm still reading.

I even feel inclined to do something on the internet and spend a few hours answering some of these questions. But whether this is going to happen, of course, I don't know. I'll say it again so that it doesn't disappear from your mind.

You don't need to trust another human being. It's not necessary. The trust is a state of consciousness and it's a trust in life.

You don't trust that a particular thing is going to happen and so on. You know that all phenomena around you are impermanent and cannot satisfy you. And that is a liberating realization because then you stop looking to this movie show around you and find something in there that's going to make your sense of self more complete and satisfying.

Of course, occasionally things do that, but not for long. So when you don't look at this movie show anymore for satisfaction, personal fulfillment, then, and you can only not look for it when you are connected with being within. So you begin to enjoy even the fact that things are impermanent.

There can be a sense of peace when you contemplate the impermanence of all things. I sound like the Buddha now, but that was a very deep teaching that he gave and it's still alive now. When you become aware of the impermanence of all things, it's quite amazing.

And that can strengthen that sense of beingness within you. The more you watch impermanence, the more you feel the something within you that is not touched by that. Consciousness itself, stillness, whatever you want to call it, the timeless being, the timeless you, the timeless deepest essence of who you are, the center of the wheel is not touched by that.

And the more you become aware of impermanence, which to the ego is a fearful thing. Oh, don't remind me of death. I don't want to be reminded that I'm going to die one day.

Don't be negative. Don't talk to me about that. I don't want to visit a graveyard and walk around and look at the gravestones.

That's awful, but it can be a wonderful thing. It can be a deep, suddenly you feel more deeply connected, more deeply connected because of the fact of impermanence around you. By becoming aware of impermanence and not running away from it internally, not denying it, but facing it fully, that actually will have the effect of strengthening your connectedness with being.

And this is the idea, of course, behind in some Buddhist traditions, the monks go to the morgue and meditate surrounded by dead bodies. Periodically they go there. And of course the egoic self, particularly the Western conditioned egoic self, there's how morbid, how absurd, why do they do that?

It's just absurd, isn't it? There's a deep reason why they do that in order to strengthen that connectedness with being, which they call emptiness. And somebody else calls fullness, it's the same place.

And so you might have seen, those of you who came to the last retreat, some of you were, or the one before that, I had a spiritual entertainment evening when I showed little clips from video clips. And one video clip was a commercial that was never shown because it was regarded as too shocking. It's a one minute thing.

It shows a woman giving birth in a hospital and the baby comes out of her womb and shoots up into the sky, out of the window into the sky. And then the camera follows the baby's flight, goes up first. And as the baby flies up into the sky, the baby, it's a boy, begins to grow already.

It grows, it becomes a young man and then grows. And then it reaches the highest point and then the descent starts. Now the baby's no longer a baby.

It's a middle-aged man. And gradually the speed increases and all the time the man is kind of screaming. He goes, ah, and then finally, descent, the man has become old, beginning to lose, has lost his hair and his teeth.

And, and then he goes up into, he hits the grave and he's in, and there's a graveyard, and that's the end. So that's basically the story of everybody's life. And to me, that's the most spiritual commercial ever shown.

And why is it spiritual? Because it shows you the impermanence and the short-lived nature of a human existence. The human part of it.

And if you contemplate that, you go, wow, wow. And if you don't run away from it internally, don't deny it, you suddenly feel a deeper sense of connectedness. For a long time, I didn't know what this commercial was actually for.

And for a long time, I thought it was for beer. Yeah. Yeah.

Because what it is for is only shown at the very end, because at the very end on the screen, you read, life is short. And then it says, play more. And then there's an X.

And I thought the X referred to a Mexican beer that has three Xs, but it's not. It refers to something called Xbox, which is a video game, apparently. And of course, what it should have said at the end, we did say, life is short, but the next sentence should have been,

don't waste it playing video games.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Much more interesting and more profitable, you'll learn so much more from this game. That reminds me of a little photo I saw somewhere, humorous picture on the internet, where a man is sitting, he has his computer there with the mouse, and he's looking out of the window with the computer, and the writing on it says, reality, the worst game ever. But of course, that's not true.

It's the, it is the best game because that's what makes you conscious. Eventually you realize through realizing who you are not, you realize who you are. First, you lose yourself in the world, you lose yourself in the mind, and then you find yourself.

And then there's a realization of consciousness realizes who it is in essence, because consciousness had lost itself in his own dream. And consciousness, that was the plan from the beginning, so to speak. Consciousness had lost itself, and then it found itself.

The Buddhists say, if there were no ignorance, there would be no enlightenment. So in other words, even losing yourself is part of it all, and it's fine. And you realize if you hadn't lost yourself, consciousness would not have realized its own nature.

So it's all, it's all fine. And the Buddhists also say, funny thing, they say eventually everything, even the blade of grass will become enlightened, which means the entire sense-perceived universe, the so-called physical universe is not really physical, it's just our sense perceptions make it appear physical, matter, but the limitations of our sense perceptions and our state of consciousness. So eventually even the blade of grass will become enlightened, meaning the entire so-called sense-perceived universe is undergoing a process of, we could say, spiritualization.

It's undergoing a transformation into something else. And it's really what is, it's the consciousness that is undergoing that transformation, because everything that you see is an aspect of consciousness in different, one could say different frequencies of consciousness, so to speak. So even human beings too, human beings are not going to remain in this particular form that they are in now.

Basically, we are the way it seems, we are like 80% or something water. Or as in one science fiction movie, the, where the artificial intelligence interacted with humans, the artificial intelligence called the humans meatbags. So it seems that the artificial intelligence had a kind of ego too, and looked, and looked down on humans and called them meatbags.

Good morning, meatbag. So humans are also going through the entire human form. We are not going to have these physical forms for the rest of our lives.

I mean, humanity, human lives. And, and this sounds almost, it came to me as a kind of insight. At first I thought it sounds a bit like science fiction, but then I realized it's actually true.

Human consciousness, all these human beings on the planet, and I mentioned that a few days ago here, are aspects of the one, there's only, there's one collective consciousness, which in itself is one aspect or one stream in the one consciousness that constitutes the universe. All human beings that have ever lived, will ever live or are living now on this planet are very, very temporary manifestations of the collective human consciousness. And so the collective has all kinds of tentacles and every tentacle is a human being.

And it appears briefly as in the commercial that I just described, except it's even more brief than one minute, really on a cosmic scale. Every human life of the human entity is a, it goes like a spark of light on the surface of the planet and it goes, that was it? Yes.

On a cosmic scale, this is how you would see a human life. But in that brief spark that arises, something is learned. Something is the one consciousness is undergoing a process of evolution in this dimension.

And with each spark, something is learned. Every spark contributes to the growth of consciousness, but no spark has an autonomous existence. It is always connected to the ultimately timeless consciousness, the human consciousness, which is an aspect of the one timeless consciousness.

So we are all a spark of the one human consciousness that's evolving. So we are in the middle of this little, and then it's gone again, but it doesn't mean anything has been lost in consciousness. Once humanity approaches the end of its evolutionary cycle as separate entities, when it reaches the end, all humans will appear as a single being in the universal consciousness.

And this single being, of course, won't have a body. This single being, of course, will not be man or woman. This single being, this single consciousness that has evolved then over a million years, contains the essence identity of all humans that have ever lived.

It is basically you. And it will know itself as I, as you. And what its further destiny is, I cannot tell you, but it is connected to the universal consciousness and will contribute and then unite with the universal consciousness.

Or before it does that, it may interact with other evolved, highly evolved beings or entities that already exist. And what it does, I have no idea, but I know the destiny is, your destiny is something that you cannot even conceive of through the mind. This only came to me as an insight, but it's comforting to know that you are actually timeless and you can't die.

It's only the temporary appearance of you that disappears. The essence does not.

Anyway, let's not go too far with philosophy.

Coming back to what the practical thing that we need to, just need to be concerned with to fulfill our destiny in this lifetime is awakening to who you are and continuing to embody the awakened state so that you can interact with this movie show that is called your life and interact with it, but increasingly not getting entangled in it anymore. And then actually that changes the nature of the movie show too. And it becomes, first of all, more enjoyable because you don't have to demand anymore that something in that movie show should permanently satisfy you.

And so when you don't place the demands anymore on those things that continuously arise and pass away around you, you can enjoy them much more. You can enjoy situations as they arise instead of complaining about them because they don't make you completely happy. They don't satisfy you.

They were supposed to satisfy me. Well, the situation don't tend to do that. And if they do it for a little while, you get disappointed soon, people, situations, and so on.

So the awakened consciousness, see what your relationship is with the movie show of your life and see how it changes in its nature, becomes less frustrating than it was before because the frustration of living in this world is making demands upon it that it cannot meet. That's frustrating. Make me happy.

How much longer until you make me happy? The egoic self says to the world, to people, to situations, places, I'm looking for a place that's ideal where I can be happy. And of course, occasionally you may find, think, oh yeah, I've got it now.

And then after you stay there for a little while, you discover, oh, I thought this was ideal. It's not. There's no place that's ideal or every place is ideal.

Another wonderful thing you discover as you no longer live exclusively from the level of your personality, something else shines through the personality, the unconditioned consciousness. You have noticed it here. I mentioned it at the beginning of the retreat.

Normally humans are totally conditioned by their upbringing and the culture they grow up in. And when two people from totally different cultures or sometimes totally different social backgrounds or whatever it may be, whatever their conditioning may be, religion sometimes. So people have been conditioned either by the surrounding culture, by the religion they grew up in, the particular family environment, all those things that constitute a person's personality.

And usually it's the case when you meet people either from totally different social backgrounds and they just can't communicate. You can even go to certain countries in Europe where still stronger divisions between social classes. Then sometimes let's say, well, it's beginning to disappear gradually in England too, but there used to be a very

strong division of classes in England.

There was the upper class who talked in a particular way, same language, but talked in a particular way. And then there was the middle class and there was the lower classes and they all had their particular way of speaking. To some extent they still have, but more people are going beyond it now.

And so you could tell in England when you met somebody, after they opened their mouth, you would immediately, the mind would go, okay, working class. Or they would go, oh, that's upper class or trying to be upper class, but it's not really upper class. And nowadays in England, you get the phenomenon of people who are born into a quite privileged family background, wealthy and traditionally called upper class.

Now, some of them are pretending to be working class. They put on a false working class accent because they have certain ideas about social justice and so on. But it's all a game and it's quite division between people.

And I mentioned at the beginning, here's so many people from different countries have come here. And the strange thing is that you probably found, there may be some exceptions, but as a general rule, there was a connectedness that you felt that transcended any kind of conditioning, national, cultural conditioning, religious conditioning, personal conditioning. When two people from totally different cultures meet, it's hard to communicate.

A Chinese man meets an American person, a Russian person meets an Italian. Each person has been conditioned by their own culture. But as spiritual awakening happens, something else, the unconditioned self being emerges through the conditioning and you can hear, meet people from other cultures and feel a strong sense of connectedness and not the division to the extent that, let's say you are American and here, let's say you meet a person from Russia, a person from India, a person from Egypt, you may feel a stronger connectedness with that person than with any other American who is still totally conditioned by their culture in whom this awakening has not happened yet. And that's a very interesting thing that there's something that unites you that is far deeper than the relatively superficial conditioning of your particular culture.

And that is the way forward for humanity. It's not to carry inside the divisions that arise through the conditioning by particular cultures or religions, but to transcend that so that the transcendent you emerges. And then the divisions between human beings disappear.

And that is the, you can experience it to have been able to experience it to some extent here. Wherever I go in the world, the people who come to the groups, the talks or the retreats, there is something in them that is to me almost immediately recognizable no matter where they come from. And I can often easily tell even in the street or in a restaurant or wherever I am, in many cases, I could tell by looking at a person whether

the spiritual dimension is there to some extent and shining through the personality or not yet shining through the personality.

So remember when you go away here, when you're not really going anywhere, you never go anywhere, you are in that timeless place, timeless and has no particular location, that place of consciousness, unconditioned consciousness and enjoy the movement around you. And then you don't have to think back and say, oh, I wish I was back at the retreat place. And you realize when you get home, you're still on retreat.

And then when you go to your workplace tomorrow or whenever, you're still on retreat, you're on permanent retreat within, you're at the center of the wheel. And that's a wonderful realization that you can be on permanent retreat and still be active in the world, but not off it. Yeah, so that's the secret of life.

So now you know it. So this has been a most wonderful gathering and the energy field has just been amazing. And everybody here is part of that.

And I'm sure for all of you has contributed greatly to the arising of presence in you, of sometimes call it presence power in you. So whether we meet again in this physical form or not, doesn't matter. There is already the realization that at the deepest level, there isn't you and me.

And if you like me, all it means is that you recognize something in me that is almost like a reflection, your own being. So all a spiritual teacher ultimately can do is reflect back to you who you are in your essence. And if you recognize something in the teacher and you say, wow, that's you, because it's only that in you can recognize it in the same way that you cannot be aware of stillness unless you become still for a moment.

And then you say, oh, it's so still, that's lovely. But the stillness is suddenly new. If you were not still, you wouldn't know it.

So if you recognize something in a teacher and you say, well, it's in you, otherwise you wouldn't recognize it. And that's where we are one, one consciousness coming through different forms. So that realization of oneness is, of course, what we could call love, not in the egoic sense, oh, I love you.

Come, don't ever leave me. But love in a deeper sense as an emanation of loving kindness, which is a recognition of the other as yourself.